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OPINION METER

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Marianas festival
this year?

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INSIDE



Peaceful Coexistence

Those who love both their dogs and their gardens often seek ways to protect their plants from the stress of daily dog traffic.

Good Housekeeping...
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Aid and Rain Coming

More aid is on the way to cyclone-ravaged Myanmar—but so is the heavy rain.

Asia...Page 18

Walters Not Biting



Barbara Walters says she refuses to engage in a debate with Star Jones, who accused her of revealing a past affair with a senator just to sell books.

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Governor recognizes Eucon's achievements. **PAGE 2**
Undersea 6.7 quake jolts Guam, Rota, Saipan. **PAGE 3**

Bar Association opposes reduction of salaries of justices, judges

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The CNMI Bar Association's committee for an independent judiciary has opposed

a Senate bill that proposed a 10 percent across the board reduction of the salaries of the Commonwealth's justices and judges.

The Bar's committee said they believe

that cutting judicial salaries is a "penny wise and pound foolish" decision.

"The people and economy of the CNMI deserve adjudicators only of the highest qualifications and integrity and the CNMI

government should remain committed to that proposition by continuing to pay the present salaries," said the committee in an e-mail to *Saipan Tribune*.

See A PENNY on Page 4

Pete A. not declaring delegate bid yet

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The CNMI's resident representative to Washington still won't say whether he is running to be the first Northern Marianas delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives.

See WASHINGTON on Page 4



Tenorio

Well-traveled executive chef comes aboard PIC

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

Darren Ferrall brings with him 25 years of culinary experience as the new executive chef of Pacific Islands Club.

See FERRALL on Page 4



MARK RABAGO

Executive Chef Darren Ferrall, right, poses with Pacific Islands Club staff, from left, Pastry Chef Cary Alamudin, Sous Chef Ceferino N. Cancaida, and Restaurant Manager Henry Worswick.

Data from *Columbia* disk drives survived the shuttle accident

By BRIAN BERGSTEIN
AP TECHNOLOGY WRITER

Jon Edwards often manages what appears impossible. He has recovered precious data from computers wrecked in floods and fires and dumped in lakes.

See DATA on Page 4

In this photo provided by Kroll Ontrack Inc., a data drive that fell from the space shuttle *Columbia* when it was destroyed in 2003 is shown.

AP



MOTHER AND DAUGHTER

Yulia Camacho plays with her 2-year-old daughter Sophia while the sun sets on a beach behind the Hyatt Regency Saipan last Friday, a couple of days before Mother's Day. Mother's Day is a day honoring mothers and their positive contributions to society; it is celebrated in many places around the world today.

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Around the CNMI



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Christian Wei Jr., Feng Mei Li, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Dr. Christian Wei, Wing Lok Leung, and Rebecca Lal Lian Pari.

Governor recognizes Eucon's achievements

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
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REPORTER

During Eucon International School's 2007-2008 graduation ceremony held at the school's newly built Agape Auditorium, Gov. Benigno R. Fitial recognized the school's strength and

growth that happened all within just a couple of years.

"Two years ago, you did not have this auditorium you now enjoy. This is a very positive development and one that shows the strength and growth of your school in just a couple of years," the governor addressed the school during the ceremony held last May 3.

"I'm happy to be here and to join you in your new auditorium—a very nice facility that demonstrates your college's terrific progress and success over the years."

Fitial cited a couple of the obstacles and challenges that the school went through in order to succeed.

He said that not only did Eucon International College had to deal with local regulatory and accreditation requirements, it also had to secure formal accreditation from the Transnational Association of Christina Colleges and School, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.

According to Fitial, Eucon International School had been successful in overcoming those obstacles, "thanks to the efforts of Dr. [Christian] Wei and your

entire school. You should be proud of how this college has come in such a relatively short period of time."

Dr. Wei, the president of the college, also delivered his message that was based on I Timothy 4:12. The sermon was meant to provide encouragement to the school's graduates and ask them to become examples to believers "in word, conversation, charity, spirit, faith, and purity."

"Eucon's goal is training students to be like Christ and will be good examples to others," Wei said. "We commit all our efforts to help the CNMI change its image so that we can send out a good and wonderful image throughout the world."

Eucon International College graduated four students last Saturday—Christian Wei Jr., who received the academic award; Feng Mei Li, who was named the college loyalty awardee; Rebecca Lal Lian Pari, who received her bachelor's degree in education; and Wing Lok Leung, who completed his bachelor of arts in pastoral studies.

Eucon is the first private college in the CNMI to obtain its accreditation from the U.S. Department of Education.

Contingent load shedding schedule begins Tuesday

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the public that effective Tuesday, May 13, 2008, a revised contingent load shedding schedule will be implemented.

Some changes to the current schedule will be made by rotating various timeslots to accommodate customer power demand, schools and other essential government facilities. Please be reminded that the

contingent schedule will only be put into operation during emergency situations as needed by the CUC.

CUC will make all efforts to keep to the contingent schedule however, it may be modified in future public notices. In addition, please be informed that the schedule may be changed to address particular emergencies when necessary. (PR)

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"Give, and it will be
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— LUKE 6:38 NIV

Customers First
TRIPLE J

Judge drops 2005 traffic case

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Juan T. Lizama has ordered the dismissal of a traffic case against a motorist who was sentenced in 2005 to spend 30 days in jail, but was arrested last month for not appearing at a review hearing.

Lizama dropped the traffic case against Jeloni S. Tailipao on the ground that the government failed to extend the defendant's probationary period to the date of the review hearing.

In his decision issued Thursday, the judge ruled that in order for the court to retain jurisdiction over the defendant, probation needed to be extended from the time of the bail hearing.

"It was not, and therefore the court must dismiss the case against the defendant as it has no jurisdiction over him," he said.

According to court records, on Sept. 8, 2005, Tailipao pleaded guilty to driving under the influence of alcohol. The court sentenced him to 90 days in prison, all of which were suspended except for 30 days.

Tailipao was placed on one year probation with the condition that he pays a \$1,000 fine, suspension of driver's license for six months, obey all CNMI and U.S. laws, and report to the Commonwealth Health Center for treatment/evaluation and compliance with any recommended treatment.

The defendant was required to pay an assessment fee of \$25 and \$100 probation fee. He was barred from possessing or consuming any alcoholic beverages during the probationary period.

Due to Tailipao's failure to comply with all of the terms of his probation and failure to appear, his probation was extended a number of times in 2006 and 2007.

In April 2007, a bench warrant was issued for the defendant's failure to appear at a review hearing.

From court submissions, it appears that the defendant was not brought into custody until sometime in April 2008.

The court ordered the defendant's release and required him to appear at the next review hearing, April 10, 2008.

In his order, Lizama said the government asserted that there is jurisdiction pursuant to the bench warrant.

Lizama said Tailipao failed to appear at a hearing, which is why the bench warrant was issued.

"While the court is sympathetic to the position of the Commonwealth, nonetheless it must dismiss the case against the defendant," the judge said.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

HISTORIC PRESERVATION WEEK

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial poses for a photo with Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez, CNMI Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio, House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios, Historic Preservation Office director Roy Sablan, DCCA acting Secretary Melvin Faisao with their *man'amko* counterparts, HPO staff, NMI Council for the Humanities Scott Russell, and guests shortly after signing the proclamation designating May 18-24, 2008 as Historic Preservation Week at the governor's conference room on Capital Hill Friday.

Undersea 6.7 quake jolts Guam, Rota, Saipan

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

An undersea earthquake with a magnitude of 6.7 jolted Guam, Saipan, and Rota yesterday morning.

There were no reports of damage to property or injuries in Guam and Saipan. A 6-magnitude earthquake can reportedly cause severe damage to property.

Saipan Tribune called the CNMI Emergency Management Office yesterday afternoon for more information, but a staff said the employees in charge of filing a report have not submitted anything yet.

The staff said EMO will likely release a report today, Sunday.

EMO would normally immediately release an advisory to the media when an earthquake occurs in the CNMI.

Some Saipan residents said they felt the quake yesterday morning.

According to the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center, the quake that struck at 7:51am at a depth of 54.4 miles failed to generate any destructive tsunami.

The U.S. Geological Survey in its report said the quake was centered 125 miles west-southwest of Hagatna, Guam and 180 miles southwest of Rota.

The center was also 250 miles southwest of Saipan and 315 miles south-southwest of Anatahan.

Last April 11, three earthquakes all with a magnitude of

5 jolted the NMI. There were no reports of damage or injuries.

Earthquakes are constantly occurring throughout the Mariana Island chain from Guam to Farallon De Pajaros, the northern most island of the CNMI.

Most of these earthquakes are minor tremors or movements that are not felt by residents of the islands but are recorded in the seismograph instruments at the EMO.

The most recent major earthquake that struck the CNMI occurred in August 1993 near Guam registering 8.1 on the Richter scale. Fortunately, the epicenter was deep and the CNMI only experienced minor damages, but Guam being closer did experience significant damages.

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Judge: Miura can be absent from LA courtroom

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A Japanese man accused of killing his wife does not have to be in a Los Angeles courtroom when his attorney argues for the charges to be dismissed, a judge said Friday.

Kazuyoshi Miura, 60, is in custody in Saipan, a U.S. territory where he was arrested in February. Authorities say he had his wife shot during a visit to Los Angeles in 1981. She died in Japan a year later, and in 1994 Miura was convicted of murder in that country; a Japanese court later overturned the verdict.

Los Angeles authorities, who

first thought the Miuras were robbery victims, issued an arrest warrant for Kazuyoshi Miura in 1988 but weren't able to arrest him until he went to Saipan this year.

In March, defense attorney Mark Geragos filed motions to quash the arrest warrant and dismiss the felony complaint for extradition. Geragos said that trying Miura for murder in Los Angeles after he was tried in Japan would violate double jeopardy rules.

But prosecutors contended the motions could not be argued unless Miura was present. He should not be allowed to "tele-

phone in his defense," Deputy District Attorney Alan Jackson said during a hearing Friday before Superior Court Judge Steven Van Sicklen.

The judge disagreed.

"It makes no sense to me to insist that the person be here when their presence isn't required," Van Sicklen said.

A written order on his decision was expected next week.

Most states prohibit trying someone twice for the same crime. In 2004, the California Legislature passed a law to allow someone who was tried in another country to stand trial again.

Geragos contends changes in the law don't apply because they came after Miura's conviction was overturned in Japan.

The Japanese clothing importer said he and his wife were vacationing in Los Angeles in 1981 when robbers shot him in

the leg and her in the head. The attack, in broad daylight on a busy downtown street, fed fears in Japan that U.S. cities were too dangerous to visit.

Police initially seemed to accept Miura's story, but eventually became convinced he had

conspired with someone to have his wife killed so he could collect on her life insurance policies. Los Angeles and Japanese investigators worked together in building a case against him.

Miura has maintained his innocence.

Washington Rep. didn't expect bill would be signed this soon

From Page 1

Washington Representative Pete A. Tenorio has said he would make a decision when the delegate bill becomes law. Now that it has, Tenorio says he is not ready to confirm rumors that he is indeed running.

The Northern Marianas delegate law calls for a November 2008 election for the Commonwealth's first non-voting representative in Congress. The law was enacted Friday as part of an omnibus measure on natural resources and energy. The act also places local immigration under federal control.

"I didn't think the President would sign the bill this soon. I thought it wouldn't happen until Tuesday. I haven't sat down with my family and friends about a possible candidacy," Tenorio said in a press conference yesterday afternoon.

He said he plans to make an announcement by the middle of next week.

Tenorio, who has been the Commonwealth's point person in the nation's capital for six years, welcomed the creation of a U.S. delegate position for the CNMI.

"I am very pleased," Tenorio said. "Finally we can move on, and the people of the CNMI can have a voice in the national legislative body. It is absolutely imperative that we have representation in Congress to make sure that the transition to federal immigration laws is as smooth and painless as possible."

He added that there is a lot more an actual member of Congress do than a resident representative. "A delegate will be directly involved in the appropriations process, can oversee the development of regulations, request GAO [Governmental Accountability Office] studies, introduce legislation and amendments to this and other laws as needed. We need a delegate more than ever," said Tenorio.

Under the delegate act, Northern Marianas will have a

representative with limited voting powers to the U.S. House of Representatives. Similar to House members and other delegates, the CNMI delegate will be elected to Congress every two years. He can serve on committees, as well as vote on legislation at the committee level. But floor voting will not be permitted.

The CNMI delegate will assume office on the third day of January after the election.

To be eligible, a candidate must be at least 25 years old, a U.S. citizen and CNMI resident for at least seven years before the election, and a qualified CNMI voter on the date of the election. A candidate for CNMI delegate must not be running for any other office.

The CNMI delegate will receive the same compensation, allowances, and benefits as a member of the House of Representatives. Each member of Congress is paid almost \$170,000 a year.

From Page 1

Now Edwards may have set a new standard: He found information on a melted disk drive that fell from the sky when space shuttle *Columbia* disintegrated in 2003.

"When we got it, it was two hunks of metal stuck together. We couldn't even tell it was a hard drive. It was burned and the edges were melted," said Edwards, an engineer at Kroll Ontrack Inc., outside Minneapolis. "It looked pretty bad at first glance, but we always give it a shot."

During *Columbia*'s fateful mission, the drive had been used to store data from a scientific experiment on the properties of liquid xenon.

Most of the information was radioed to Earth during *Columbia*'s voyage. Edwards was able to recover the remainder, allowing researchers to publish the experiment in the April issue of a science

journal, *Physical Review E*.

That led Kroll Ontrack to share details of its salvage effort.

Columbia broke apart during re-entry into the atmosphere on Feb. 1, 2003, killing its seven astronauts. The shuttle had been damaged at launch by foam insulation that fell off an external fuel tank.

Like other *Columbia* debris, the mangled disk drive turned up in Texas. It was six months after the disaster when a NASA contractor sent the drive to Kroll Ontrack, which specializes in data recovery.

Edwards had reason for pessimism. Not only were the drive's metal and plastic elements scorched, but the seal on the side that keeps out dirt and dust also had melted. That made the drive vulnerable to particles that can scratch the tiny materials embedded inside, destroying their ability to retain data in endless 0s or 1s, depending on their magnetic charge.

However, at the core of the

drive, the spinning metal platters that actually store data were not warped. They had been gouged and pitted, but the 340-megabyte drive was only half full, and the damage happened where data had not yet been written.

Edwards attributes that to a lucky twist: The computer was running an ancient operating system, DOS, which does not scatter data all over drives as other approaches do.

After cleaning the platters with a chemical solution, Edwards used them in a newly built drive. The process—two days from start to finish—captured 99 percent of the drive's information.

Edwards was gratified.

And to drive home just what a long shot his recovery had been, he later had no success with two other drives found in *Columbia*'s wreckage. Blasted by the unfathomable furnace of entry into the atmosphere, their metals had lost the ability to hold a magnetic charge.



JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

POLICE WEEK

Dandan Elementary School students curiously look on the K9 police dogs during the Police Week open house outside the Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe Thursday. Department of Public Safety and other law enforcement agencies showcased and educated members of the community and students about what each agency does and how law enforcement can be a career opportunity for them. The event is part of the Police Week 2008 celebration, organized by DPS and Ports Police.

A penny wise and pound foolish decision

From Page 1

will decrease from \$120,000 to \$108,000.

The bill states that the tax base cannot continue to support the Judiciary's large payroll.

But the Bar Association's committee for an independent judiciary opposed the bill.

"Indeed, it is our understanding that the Judicial Branch of our government, one of the three co-equal branches, only receives about two percent of our government's operating expenses," the committee said.

Cutting the judiciary's budget further is not the place to start, the committee said. It explained that the role of the judiciary is to uphold the rule of law separate from politics or personal morality.

"The bedrock of an ordered society is the rule of law, and it extends not only to self-government but also as the foundation for

personal and economic development," the committee said.

It pointed out that the protections of the rule of law, however, only go so far as their enforcement by the courts.

An independent judiciary, therefore, is essential to the CNMI and its families and citizenry, the committee said.

The NMI Constitution charges the CNMI judiciary with ultimate authority over the life, relationships, freedoms, rights, duties, and properties of the people.

"Indeed, beyond the power judges and justices hold over our familial and personal lives, our economy is dependent upon investor confidence that disputes will be tried by a judiciary that is competent and free from improper influence," the committee said.

Ferrall looks forward to satisfying guests' palates

From Page 1

and European so a lot of the food is innovative."

Asked what his goals are this early in the job, the 40-year-old Tasmanian who now makes Adelaide, South Australia, his home said making guests happy is No. 1.

"One hundred percent guest satisfaction is always a challenge, fresh produce (meat items) and at this stage cheap fuel," he joked.

PIC F&B Director Steve Balakrishna said Ferrall appears to be the right man for the job as he has a wealth of experience that could benefit the San Antonio resort's food and beverage department.

"He been to many places and a wide range of culinary experience and is a very people person. He

also has the capacity to show his expertise. I am very sure that with his knowledge, he will bring PIC to another level and we are happy to have him onboard. I welcome him. Very importantly, he loves what he does and connects well with whom he comes in contact with," he said.

Ferrall and his family of four—he brought with him to the Pacific his wife Kellie and their two daughters names, Ally and Chelsie—have only been on Saipan for a week, but he says so far so good about his move to Micronesia.

"To early to totally comment, but we have experienced a very warm welcome from all of those that I have come in contact with so far, the weather is great," he said.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Staff of *RASHIN* magazine poses with Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Perry Tenorio and MVA's Hiroko Tenorio.

RASHIN magazine to feature CNMI

RASHIN magazine staff were recently in the CNMI to do a feature story promoting "Long Staying Active Senior Living" in the islands. The quarterly publication has a circulation of 100,000 with readers being active men and women in their 50s.

The crew of two spent time exploring Saipan, Tinian, and Rota as well as interviewing local Japanese to learn more about living in the CNMI. The 10-page article will run in the June issue showcasing the islands for the active senior market in Japan. The estimated value of the exposure is \$50,000.

"The active senior market is important to the Marianas Visitors Authority," said MVA managing director Perry Tenorio. "Our close proximity to Japan combined with our tropical weather, make our islands very attractive to this market."

MVA extends its appreciation to Baybreeze on Rota, Fleming Hotel and Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino on Tinian, and Aquarius Beach Tower, LaoLao Bay Golf Resort, Saipan Sea Ventures, Himawari Restaurant, Hertz Rent-a-car, and Gentle Brook Café on Saipan. (PR)



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

RASHIN magazine interviews a Japanese senior couple during their visit to the CNMI.



BREANNA YSABEL TURNS ONE

Birthday greetings go out to Breanna Ysabel A. Patawaran, who turns a year old today, May 11. Greetings from Dad, Mom, and the whole family.



HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY

Kick up your shoes and relax! It's your day Mom and you deserve it! Happy Mother's Day Mom and Grandma Terry L. Kisa! Lots of love from your children and grandkids!

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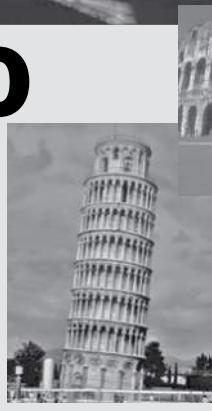
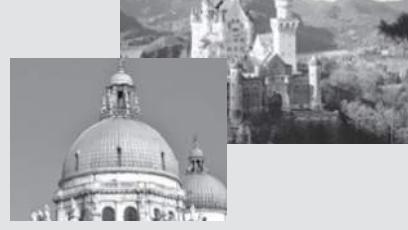
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Opinion

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EDITORIAL

Zimbabwe's terror

As the world looks on, Robert Mugabe's campaign of terror against the people of Zimbabwe continues unchecked. On Thursday, The Post's Craig Timberg reported that gangs from Mugabe's ruling party beat 11 opposition activists to death on Monday in the town of Chiweshe, 90 miles north of the capital of Harare. The same day, at least five people were murdered by the president's thugs in the village of Dakudzwa, according to reporting by the Los Angeles Times. Across the country, truckloads of men are pulling into rural villages and towns that voted against Mugabe in the March 29 elections, rounding up opposition supporters for beatings or worse and burning their homes and crops.

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change, which won both the presidential and parliamentary elections, says that at least 32 of its supporters have been killed by the government offensive in the past two weeks. The Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights says about 700 people are known to have been treated for injuries. The General Agriculture and Plantation Workers Union says that as many as 40,000 farmworkers and their families have been driven from their homes.

Even observers sympathetic to the Mugabe regime have confirmed what is going on. "We have seen it, there are people in hospital who said they have been tortured, you have seen pictures, you have seen pictures of houses that have been destroyed and so on," said Kingsley Mamabolo, the leader of an eight-member South African fact-finding team, according to the Zimbabwe Guardian newspaper. Mamabolo's group was dispatched by South African President Thabo Mbeki, who has emerged as the principal obstacle to international intervention in Zimbabwe's crisis.

Mbeki, who is supposed to be mediating on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), has done nothing to stop the violence, despite rising outrage in his own country. Nor has he pressed Mugabe to accept the results of the elections. The 84-year-old president permitted his election commission to release the results of the presidential race only last Friday, more than a month after the vote. Officially the incumbent was awarded 43 percent of the ballots to 48 percent for challenger Morgan Tsvangirai, making a second round necessary. The opposition claims that Tsvangirai won with more than 50 percent of the vote. In any case, Mugabe's men are saying that they won't schedule the second round within the three-week time frame required by the constitution—and may delay it by up to 12 months.

In the meantime, Mugabe clearly intends to terrorize the country into voting for him. Only intervention by Zimbabwe's neighbors or the United Nations is likely to stop him. It is past time for the SADC to relieve Mbeki of his duties and demand that Mugabe immediately end the violence. The U.N. Security Council, which was blocked by South Africa from formally considering the matter last month, is now chaired by Britain; it should urgently consider action, including a resolution ordering Mugabe to cease repression and allow international supervision of any second-round vote.

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The end of an era for the Commonwealth

Editor's Note: The following is the statement of Gov. Benigno R. Fitial regarding the approval of the CNMI Takeover Bill.

The passage of S. 2739, the CNMI Federal Takeover bill imposing unprecedented U.S. immigration and labor controls, represents the end of an era for the people and government of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

I believe that local control of immigration, labor, and minimum wage policies under our Covenant agreement with the United States Government served as vital economic development tools that transformed the CNMI economy during the 1980s and 1990s, and created a higher standard of living for CNMI residents and non-resident guest workers. The CNMI's liberal free market policies previously enabled the CNMI to attract investments and develop a

By BENIGNO R. FITIAL
Special to the Saipan Tribune



would be a weak and distressed economy.

Our ability to attract capital will also be severely compromised by our inability, under federal law, to attract and keep an adequate foreign workforce to further develop our economy and increase our standard of living. Investment capital will likely not be attracted by

The recently approved federal immigration legislation was not justified by existing CNMI economic conditions and failed to take the CNMI's true economic situation into account. In advancing the bill, prominent U.S. policymakers got CNMI population figures wrong, greatly exaggerating the population of nonresident workers by a factor of one hundred. And sweatshop conditions and our garment industry were wrongly cited as justifications for the federal legislation, as federal policy-makers pointedly failed to recognize the demise of our apparel manufacturing industry and the weakness in our tourism base.

more modern and prosperous economy that substantially removed the poverty experienced during the days of the U.S. Trust Territory government.

I had hoped to continue using these sound economic tools to orchestrate an economic recovery for the CNMI, and I deeply regret that recently passed federal legislation may impede our local government's ability to orchestrate an economic recovery based on sound economic incentives and competitive free market policies.

I understand that there are three factors of production vital to the success of any economy. These factors of production are land, labor, and capital. The federal government's arbitrary political restrictions will severely damage our ability to attract and keep a sufficient labor force to sustain and grow our island economy. The new federal law, for instance, mandates that all CNMI guest workers will be phased out in five years. An economy without an adequate supply of labor

artificially high labor costs resulting from forced federal minimum wage increases based on political rather than sound economic considerations. Forced federal wage increases would increase the cost of doing business and exacerbate an upward inflationary spiral already caused by record high fuel costs and the loss of the CNMI's garment industry shipping subsidy previously derived from greater export volume and economies of scale.

The recently approved federal immigration legislation was not justified by existing CNMI economic conditions and failed to take the CNMI's true economic situation into account. In advancing the bill, prominent U.S. policymakers got CNMI population figures wrong, greatly exaggerating the population of nonresident workers by a factor of one hundred. And sweatshop conditions and our garment industry were wrongly cited as justifications for the federal

See THE END on next page

EDITORIAL POLICY

The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, CIC Centre, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Letters to the Editor

Why I resigned from MINA

The recent letter to the editor (May 1 and 8, 2008) from the Mariana Islands Nature Alliance (MINA), regarding their support for the proposed PEW monument has prompted me to write this letter to let my families, friends, and acquaintances know that I am no longer associated with this organization for this very reason. Although I have not been very active with MINA since this issue was first discussed last year, it is only right that I use this opportunity to officially resign as a board member of MINA.

From the very beginning, when the PEW representative approached MINA during our strategy meeting

and wanted us to lead and spearhead the establishment of this monument idea, I made it very clear I will not support the monument and, most especially, I objected for MINA to take the lead. I made my position crystal clear despite the offer by PEW to finance MINA for such undertaking for a lucrative amount per year should MINA agrees to take on the proposal and take the lead. My position then and now, is that this matter is best be addressed by the native people of these islands, their traditional leaders, as well as their current elected leaders. And if any decision needs to be made, the native people of these islands should be

the ones to decide whether or not they want more than 1/3 of their ancestral properties (land and ocean) turn into a national monument. As we all know, whatever the outcome of the proposed monument, native islanders are the ones who will be impacted the most, including their future generations.

I'm also concern that whatever potential, if any, the three islands and their surrounding waters may have will be held hostage should the area be designated a national monument, just like in the case of the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument.

Suddenly PEW's proponents have become experts on what is good and

bad for the native islanders. They even criticized our traditional knowledge of conservation, a knowledge that even the scientific community continues to find amazing.

I never for a moment believe PEW representatives when they enumerated all the great benefits that will benefit the native islanders. It's the same old propaganda that I've heard too many times from salesmen, which irritate me more than anything. Even the benefits under the Covenant are not fully realized today, and we may never see those benefits in the years to come. What guarantee do the proponents have to assure us that we will get these benefits

when the monument is established? I say nothing. In fact, we have nothing to gain but everything to lose.

I wish PEW's proponents give us some time to digest all the information and propaganda that they continue to shove down our throats over the past several years. But as arrogant and disrespectful as they are, they do not know how to stop and listen. Our elected leaders have already spoken for us, and they must be respected.

I hold no hard feelings against MINA and wish them luck.

Lino M. Olopai
Chalan Kanoa

The unfortunate dilemma of municipal councils

According to an article in local papers of May 8, the proposal for abolition of municipal councils, and the many misconceptions that have been associated thereto, has reared its ugly head anew. Once again, Mr. Felipe Q. Atalig and Rep. Arnold I. Palcios seem to be at loggerheads regarding the issue. The question of council abolition is a double-edged sword—and both sides have some points, but here are some facts by plain reading of the constitution:

1. The CNMI Constitution sets the guidelines for municipal (local) governments in Article VI. Section 2 is written to specify FOUR Mayors in FOUR districts: "Tinian and Aguiguan," "Rota," "Saipan," and "The Islands North of Saipan." However, section 6 is written so as to appear to establish a Municipal Council for each of only THREE districts: "Tinian and Aguiguan," "Rota," and "Saipan and the islands north of Saipan." Ambiguous indeed!

2. Section 7 appears to be written with even more ominous consequences: "The powers of the municipal councils shall extend to all local matters of a predominately local nature not pre-empted by the Commonwealth Legislature..." This could give one the impression that the legislature COULD

pre-empt the individual powers of the council (but NOT the Council itself!). How weird: to giveth and taketh in one foul sentence!

3. Section 8 (first sentence) specifically establishes "Tinian and Aguiguan" and "Rota" as "Chartered Municipalities" with no mention whatever of the other district(s) and this was affirmed by a Supreme Court question. (That did not give them a charter – only that they ARE chartered). Even weirder is the SECOND sentence of section 8: "Local taxes paid to the chartered municipal governments of Rota, and, Tinian and Aguiguan, and Saipan may be expended..." How can the document possibly include Saipan as a chartered entity without first establishing it as such?

A chartered municipality is entitled to its own level of "local self government" by enacting a self-governance document called a "charter" and snuggles nicely beneath the wings of state level constitutional authorization—but without state level interference in its local affairs that do not affect the overall state as a whole. Unfortunately, Saipan and the islands north of Saipan appear NOT to be afforded this same level of autonomy under the current constitu-

tion, which does NOT establish them as such, and, therefore, are probably not authorized to enact their own self-governance charter.

Under a charter system, found throughout most U.S. Political demography's, Municipal Councils form an integral and necessary system of checks, balances and ordinance making duties at the local level. Elected "state level" senators and representatives carry the desires and wishes of their local constituents (as a group) to a higher level that affects the entire population of the state—and only those activities. The same is accomplished at the Federal level. This system effectively precludes duplication of duties and responsibilities at each level and results in a "separation of authorities" that serves to benefit the population best at each level. But nowhere else have I been able to find ANY legislative ability to "pre-empt" the authority of a Municipal council. In fact, everywhere I checked such idiocy was prohibited.

In other words, the Tinian and Rota Municipal councils, operating under a chartered local government system may have quite a different legal standing than that of Saipan. It is

something of an enigma as to why the constitution mandates a "Municipal Council" for each island yet fails to establish Saipan as a "Municipality." Regardless, all were robbed of their mandated authority by early legislators who, as stated by Mr. Atalig, appear to have usurped their power in a zealous power grab that to this day is inappropriately tolerated, and as yet unchallenged, by the people of these islands.

Whether or not Saipan actually has a legal claim to maintain a municipal council even though authorized by the constitution, especially in light of the absence of the constitutional establishment as a "Chartered Municipality", is a question yet to be answered—but I applaud loudly the attempts by Saipan to not only hold onto its Municipal council, but to give it some teeth as well. The shortsighted and myopic view of the lieutenant governor when he vetoed Tinian's recent attempt at expanding its charter, was both unfortunate and a desperate attempt to hold onto that which was unceremoniously "grabbed" years ago (1983).

The speculative proposal to abolish municipal councils is nothing more

than an overt attempt to permanently secure the "power" that was misplaced by possibly inappropriate legislative actions of the past. Such authority belongs in the hands of the people—not the political sycophants currently embroiled in endless minutia and pointless gamesmanship in order to avoid dealing with the real problems confronting the CNMI.

Perhaps the next such attempt by Tinian will not be as ineptly received and we would surely welcome Rota to join in this attempt to restore our constitutionally mandated right to local self government and control over strictly local matters without the meddling interference from the state. It is little more than wishful thinking to believe that any legislatively driven attempt at abolishing this constitutional mandate, and thereby consolidating yet more power into the hands of the self-serving few, would be well received by the people.

Meanwhile, Rep. Palcios, with all due respect, please keep your hands off Municipal councils. You have much bigger fish to fry.

Dr. Thomas D. Arkle, Jr.,
San Jose, Tinian

THE END

From Page 6

legislation, as federal policy-makers pointedly failed to recognize the demise of our apparel manufacturing industry and the weakness in our tourism base.

Like the federal minimum wage law applied to the CNMI, the federal immigration bill was passed without the benefit of an economic impact study, and despite conflicting interpretations of the legislation's provisions.

For example, long after the Senate passed S. 2739 on April 10, 2008, the Senate Energy Committee report on the bill has been made public. Full of long-discredited allegations regarding the Commonwealth and numerous technical errors, the report rejects GAO's view of a critical section of the legislation.

The provision in question relates to the issuance of H visas in Guam and the CNMI during the "transition program" without being restricted by the numerical limitations applicable nationally to such visas. In its legal report

dated March 28, 2008, the GAO took the position that this exemption from these limitations would end on December 31, 2014, even if the Secretary of Labor exercised the authority granted under the legislation to extend the transition period for up to five years. According to GAO, the Secretary is authorized only to extend the CNMI-Only Transitional Program in the bill, but not other aspects of the transition program, such as the provisions relating to the issuance of H visas.

The CNMI strongly opposed this interpretation as unsupported by the language of the bill, its legislative history, and common sense. The Senate Committee report agrees with this position. With respect to this exemption from the numerical caps, the Committee states:

"The Committee notes that this waiver is necessary to help meet the anticipated labor demands of the planned U.S. military buildup in Guam and the CNMI, and the Committee intends that this waiver of the numerical limitations for Guam and the CNMI is extended along with any extension of the five-year transition period."

Two paragraphs later, the Committee discusses the power of the Secretary of Labor to extend the transition period and points out:

"It is important to note that the transition period covers several policies and programs and is not limited to the Commonwealth Only Transitional Workers Program. For example, the transitional program also covers the Guam/CNMI waiver on numerical limitations on the INA H-visa program."

The Committee's effort to justify the legislation is based almost entirely on allegations and facts before the Committee eight years earlier.

■ It relies on statistics regarding the CNMI workforce presented by the Commission on Immigration Reform in 1997. The report ignores the current data supplied by the Commonwealth regarding its actual population and the substantial reduction in the number of foreign workers since 2005.

■ It ignores the changing nature of the CNMI economy as a result of the 2005 changes in world trade rules and the departure from the CNMI of most of the apparel factories.

■ It ignores the current economic depression in the CNMI and makes no effort to assess the likely impact of the legislation on the economy and the Commonwealth's citizens.

■ It recycles 1997 allegations from the Immigration and Naturalization Service regarding law enforcement problems and the inroads of organized crime into the CNMI. These allegations were unsupported at the time and certainly have no relevance to the Commonwealth today.

■ It cites a 2006 report by the Federal Ombudsman as supporting a persistent pattern of exploitation and mistreatment of aliens. This was a report that was so convincingly rebutted by the CNMI Department of Labor that the Ombudsman has not prepared another report in the last two years.

The Senate Committee report is confusing in many respects.

■ The report states that the Committee recommends the House bill (H.R.3079) for approval "without amendment." But in fact the bill submitted to the Senate did have two amendments – the most important one being the changed

date of the expiration of the transition period (from 2013 to 2014).

■ The report includes a version of H.R.3079 which was not the version actually passed by the House of Representatives and sent to the Senate for action.

■ The report "encourages" the federal agencies implementing the legislation "to keep the costs associated with the transition program period on employers and non-immigrant guest workers at the same level as is currently being assessed by the CNMI government under local law." But the report of the Congressional Budget Office included in the Committee report anticipates a very different end result. It states that "We expect that by 2010 [the Department of Homeland Security] would cover its costs by collecting fees from applicants for visas."

I deeply regret that this legislation was passed to the detriment of the CNMI's economic recovery efforts, and I will continue to consult with the Legislature, the business community, and other interested stakeholders about our options going forward.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.

▲85°	▼76°	▲85°	▼75°	▲86°	▼75°	▲85°	▼76°	▲86°	▼77°
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Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Cloudy	▲88	▼77
Palau	T'Storms	▲86	▼78
Yap	T'Storms	▲86	▼77
Chuuk	T'Storms	▲88	▼76
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼74
Kosrae	T'Storms	▲88	▼76
Majuro	T'Storms	▲83	▼73

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	▲60	▼55
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲72	▼55
Hong Kong	Cloudy	▲81	▼73
Honolulu	Mostly Sunny	▲86	▼72
London	Cloudy	▲74	▼58
Los Angeles	Cloudy	▲70	▼56
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲90	▼77
Melbourne	Partly Sunny	▲68	▼54
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼74
New York	Cloudy	▲66	▼50
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	▲62	▼52
Paris	Sunny	▲76	▼56
Pusan	Sunny	▲62	▼49
Rome	Cloudy	▲74	▼56
Salem	Mostly Cloudy	▲58	▼41
San Francisco	Cloudy	▲64	▼49
Seoul	Mostly Cloudy	▲62	▼46
Tokyo	Rain	▲63	▼55
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲68	▼52

Tides

Saipan Harbor

1:28AM Today High Tide: 1.9 Feet

6:49AM Today Low Tide: 1.3 Feet

10:59AM Today High Tide: 1.7 Feet

6:49PM Today Low Tide: -0.2 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:50AM	6:37PM
Monday	5:49AM	6:38PM
Tuesday	5:49AM	6:38PM
Wednesday	5:49AM	6:38PM
Thursday	5:48AM	6:39PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:17AM	12:25AM*
Monday	12:14PM	1:07AM*
Tuesday	1:07PM	1:44AM*
Wednesday	1:56PM	2:20AM*
Thursday	2:45PM	2:54AM*

*Following Day

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

■ ISLAND SNAPSHOT

Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.

■ BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.

■ BUSINESS

Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.

■ SAMUT SARI

Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.

■ TRAVELOGUE

Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

■ COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

■ CAMPUS BULLETIN

Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.

Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).

Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.

Photos must have been taken in the last two months.

For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

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To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.

For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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For classifieds contact (670) 23

Schedule of Religious Services

CATHOLIC

Mt. Carmel Cathedral

Sunday Mass: 6am, 9am, 11am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm

Korean Center

Sunday: 10:30am
Wednesday: 10am
Thursday-Friday: 8pm
Saturday: 3pm and 7:30pm

Kristo Rai Parish

Sunday Mass: 6am, 8am and 9:30am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6am and 6pm
Saturday: 6am and 6pm

Nuestra Senora De Soledad Parish

Wednesday Mass: 6pm
First Friday Healing Mass: 6pm
Saturday Mass: 6pm
Sunday Masses: 7:30am & 9am

Saint Jude Parish

Sunday: 6am, 8am, 10am
Wednesday and Thursday: 6pm

San Antonio Parish

Sunday: 6am and 8am
Tuesday and Friday: 6pm

San Francisco de Borja-Rota

Sunday: 6am and 8am
Monday-Saturday: 6am
Wednesday: 6pm

San Isidro-Rota

Sunday: 5am and 10am
Monday-Wednesday: 7pm
Thursday-Saturday: 5am and 7pm

San Jose (Oleai) Parish

Sunday: 6am and 7:30am
Tuesday-Wednesday and Friday-Saturday: 6pm

San Roque Parish

Sunday: 9am
Wednesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10:30am

San Vicente Parish

Sunday: 6am, 9am and 6pm
Monday-Saturday: 6pm

Santa Remedios

Sunday: 7:30am
Tuesday: 6pm
Saturday: 10am-Baptism

Santa Soledad

Sunday: 7:30am

PROTESTANT

Born Again Christian (Upper Room Int'l Ministries), Saipan

Wednesday Prayer and Healing Night: 8:10-10:30pm
Saturday Tagalog Service: 8:10-10:30pm
Sunday English Service: 9:30-11am
Sunday School for Children: 10-11am
Sunday Filipino Service: 7:30pm

Calvary Baptist Church, Saipan

Sunday School: 9am
Sunday Morning Worship: 10am
Sunday Evening Worship: 6pm
Wednesday Prayer Service: 7pm

Chinese Christian Church of Saipan

Worship Services: Sunday, 10am and 7:30pm
Bible Study: Tuesday-Friday, 9:25pm

Cornerstone Christian Church, Saipan

Worship/Study Opportunities
Adult Sunday School: 9am
Youth Sunday School: 9am
English Worship Service Sunday: 10am
Sunday Service: 5:30pm
Worship/Fellowship Sunday: 9:30pm
Evangelism/Follow-up: Sunday/Monday: 1:30-7:30pm
Worship Team: Monday/Saturday-9pm;
Cell Groups Tuesday: 7:30pm
Mid-week Service: 7:30pm
Prayer Meeting Wednesday: 7:30pm
Leader's Bible Study Friday: 7:30pm
Cornerstone School of Ministry Saturday: 7:30pm

Episcopal/Anglican Church on Saipan

St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Worship Service Sunday: Holy Communion 9:00am
Place: Vicarage, Chalan Laulau,
Call 235-0545 for directions

Grace Christian Assembly, Saipan

Worship Service: 9am
GBI Classes: 4-6pm
Prayer Meeting: Monday-Saturday: 6am
Sunday: 7am
Home Cell Bible Study: Wednesday-Friday: 7pm
Youth Service: Friday: 5:30pm

Iglesia Ni Cristo, Saipan

Wednesday: 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Thursday: 5:30am (English); 7:45 pm (English)
Saturday: 5:30am (Tagalog); 7:45pm (Tagalog)
Sunday: 6:45am (English)
Children Worship Service: Sunday, 9am (English)

Immanuel United Methodist Church Kobilerville

Sunday Services
9:00 AM
Place of the church-next to Mt. Carmel Cathedral on Chalan Kanoa Dr. • Tel: 322-6158
Pastor JJ Matsumoto

Immanuel Methodist Church (Filipino Congregation)

Sunday: 7:00am-Choir Rehearsal
8:00am-Church Service (Tagalog)

9:15am-Sunday School
Wednesday: 6:30pm, home group
8:00pm-Prayer Meeting
Thursday: 7:30pm-Choir Practice (Church)
Saturday: 8:00pm-Choir Practice (Parsonage)

Jesus is Lord Church, Saipan

English Service: 9:11am, Sunday
Tagalog Service: 6:30pm, Sunday

Korean Presbyterian Church, Saipan

Sunday School: 8:20am
Sunday Adult: 10am
Sunday Adult: 11:30am
Sunday Evening: 7:30pm
Wednesday: 8pm

Life in the Son Christian Fellowship, Saipan

Sunday Worship Service: 10am-12noon
Tuesday: Leadership Institute 7pm-10pm
Wednesday: Corporate prayer 7pm-8pm
Last Friday of the month-prayer: 7pm-11pm
Friday: Youth on Fire: 7pm-9pm
Tel. No. 235-LIFE (5433)

Marianas Baptist Church, Saipan

English Worship Service: 9:10:30am
Evening Worship Service: 6:30pm
Children Sunday School: 9:10:30am
Tagalog Sunday School: 11am-12pm
English Sunday School: 11am-12pm
Korean Worship Service: 11am-12pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting:
English, 7pm-8pm
Korean: 8:30pm-9:30pm

Missions Connection Ministry

Every Sunday Celebrations:
10am (English), 6pm (Tagalog)
Wednesday Bible Study: 7pm
Youth Impact Friday: 7pm
Saturday Prayer Meeting: 7pm

Northern Marianas Christian Church

Sunday Worship Service 10am Fina Sisu Housing FS#1 (Child care will be provided)
Friday Services @ 7pm Fina Sisu FS#1 for more info pls. contact Ryan 484-2620

Salipan Bible Fellowship Church

Sunday School: 9:30-10am
Divine Worship: 10am-11:30am
Evening Service: 7pm-8:30pm
Wednesday Prayer Meeting: 8pm-9pm

Salipan Christian Church

Sunday: 7:30am-10am
Sunday: 6:30 pm-9pm
Monday: 8 pm-10pm (Prayer Meeting)
Thursday: 8pm-10pm (Cell Groups)

Salipan Church of Christ

Sunday Bible Class: 9am
Sunday Worship: 10am
Sunday Worship English: 6pm
Sunday Worship Tagalog: 7pm
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:30pm

Salipan Community Church

(Sunday Services)
Palau Service: 7:30am-9am
English Service: 10am-11:30am
Chuukese Service: 1pm-2:30pm
Filipino Service: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Saipan

(Saturday Church Services)
Sabbath School Program: 9-10am
Lesson Study: 10:10-40am
Divine Service: 11-12pm
Visitation: 3-4pm
Adventist Youth Program: 4:30-5:30pm
Sundown Worship: 6-7pm

First Baptist Church

(Formerly Saipan Baptist Church)
Afetna St., San Antonio
Sunday

9am Sunday school
10am Regular worship
6pm worship

Wednesday

7pm worship

Everyone is warmly welcome to attend our worship services. Transportation is readily available to anyone who needs a ride to our church. For further information, please call Pastor David M. McLure at 234-1939/235-7779.

Thy Word Ministries Saipan

Faith Center
Phone 234-0209
New Christian Charismatic Church Service

located in Chalan Pao, Beach Road in the Sablan building on the 2nd floor above Subway Sandwiches.

Senior Pastors: George & Gail Kamakahi
Asst. Pastors: Eric & Penny Sakaguchi
Service Times

Sunday 10:00am Worship Service
Sunday 7pm Discipleship Classes
Tuesday 10:00am Bible Studies
Tuesday 6:00pm Intercessory Prayer
Tuesday 7:00pm Music Practice
Wednesday 7:00pm Mid-Week Service
Saturday 10:00am Evangelism

Upper Room International Ministries

Sunday 5:30am-6:30am
Morning prayer

7am-9am English service
7am-9am Sunday school
10am-12noon English service,

Kobilerville

Wednesday 7pm-9pm Prayer meeting
Saturday 7pm-9pm Tagalog service

Venue: Jason Presbyterian Church
Gualo Rai, Saipan

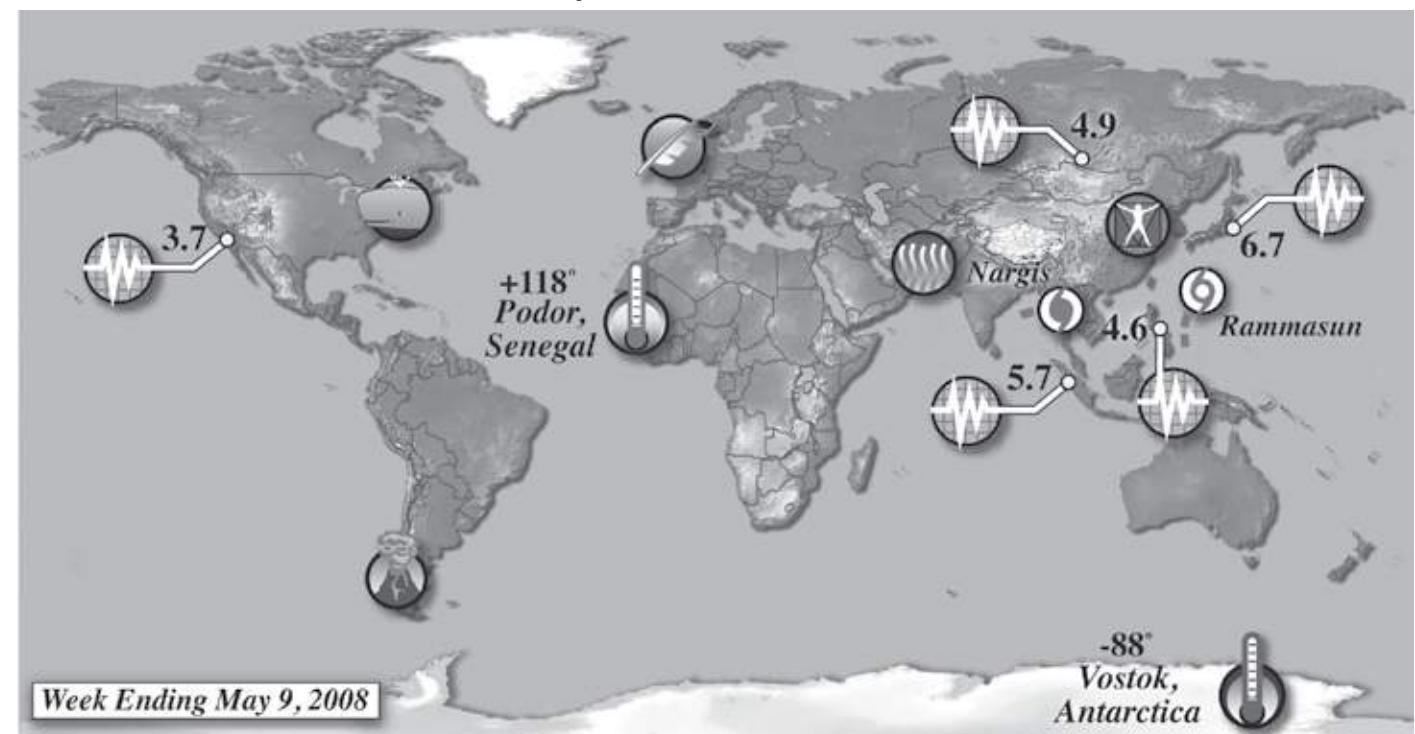
Victory Chapel Christian Fellowship Church

Sunday School: 9:30am
Sunday AM Worship: 10:30am
Sunday PM Worship: 7:00am
Wed Worship: 7:30pm

Prayer 45 min. Prior to Service Times
Morning Prayer: 6-8am M-S

Earthweek: A Diary of the Planet

By STEVE NEWMAN



Listening for Whales

A new underwater acoustic system positioned around Boston Harbor is expected to help prevent collisions between North Atlantic right whales and the passing ships that often kill the marine mammals. Worldwide, only about 400 of the species are believed to have survived centuries of hunting and ship collisions. Once the sound of a whale has been detected in the busy shipping lanes around Cape Cod, nearby vessels will be asked to sail no faster than 10 knots. The network of marine microphones and the accompanying monitoring system will cost about \$1 million each year for the next 25 years, according to the Stellwagen Bank National Marine Sanctuary. "It's definitely an expensive tactic," said sanctuary marine biologist Leila Hatch. "But, the shipping industry has accepted it."

An Olympic Effort

Chinese officials say they are launching a massive public hygiene program to battle a recent viral outbreak that has killed 30 children, as well as to curb the spread of any other diseases prior to this summer's Beijing Olympic Games. The Center for Health Protection said it is possible that infections of hand, foot and mouth disease, which have spread rapidly across China in recent weeks, could reach historic highs this summer. The disease is caused by a virus, known as Enterovirus 71 (EV71), and often produces mild symptoms in children. But this year's outbreak has killed more than two dozen youths as it expanded from northeastern China to around Hong Kong and even into neighboring areas of Vietnam. The mutation of EV71 responsible for this year's outbreak appears to be unusually virulent, health experts say.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

In Cuba it's close, but no giant cigar

HAVANA (AP)—Looks like it will be close, but no giant cigar, for Cuba's stogie-rolling king Jose Castelar. The 64-year-old former world-record holder has teamed up with five assistants, using nearly 93 pounds (42 kilograms) of top-quality tobacco to assemble a 98-foot (30-meter) cigar. Castelar set Guinness Records for the world's longest cigars in 2001, 2003 and April 2005, when he completed a stogie measuring 20.41 meters, just shy of 67 feet. On Tuesday, he said he is shooting for a fourth title. But Castelar, who learned the art of cigar-making from an uncle at age 5, is likely to fall short this time: Guinness

Heat and Dust

The Indian subcontinent's annual stretch of pre-monsoon heat has killed at least six people in Pakistan, where temperatures soared to 118 degrees Fahrenheit during the first week of May. Increased demand placed on the power grid by the use of air conditioners caused frequent blackouts, some lasting up to 16 hours. The region's famed season of heat and dust begins in April and often peaks in mid-May. The arrival of the southwest monsoon usually brings cooling rains by late June.

Andean Disaster

Entire populations of cities and towns in remote southern Chile were evacuated due to a massive Andean eruption that blanketed the region with a thick coating of toxic ash. Chilean navy ships transported many of the 4,500 residents of Chaiten to safety after a volcano of the same name erupted violently a few miles away for the first time in at least 9,000 years. Falling ash blew hundreds of miles eastward across Argentina's Patagonia region, killing livestock, poisoning crops and contaminating water supplies as it fell to the ground. Scientists say it could be months before the volcano calms down enough to allow the evacuees to return home.

Earthquakes

A powerful quake centered just off Japan's eastern Honshu Island caused buildings to sway in Tokyo, more than 100 miles away. No tsunamis or significant damage were reported.

■ Earth movements were also felt in the central Philippines, western Sumatra, Russia's Lake Baikal region and north of San Diego, Calif.

says Puerto Rican cigar-maker Patricio Pena crafted a whopping 41.2-meter (135-foot) stogie last year. Competition from cigar rollers in the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico is stiff but friendly, driving Castelar to keep rolling.

Pa. women robbed of purses show police suspect's photo

BENSALEM, Pa. (AP)—Police had no trouble tracking down a suspect in the robbery of three women at a Bucks County convenience store, because the women had taken the man's picture a short time earlier at a bar. The suspect, Andre Smith, struck up a conversation with a group women at a

bachelorette party at the Bensalem Township taproom early Sunday morning, said the township's public safety director, Fred Harran. The women were taking photos of each other when Smith jumped in front of the camera, Harran said. Smith later was ejected from the bar for allegedly harassing customers. When two women in the group left the bar to go to a nearby convenience store, Smith robbed them of their pocketbooks, Harran said. The women recognized Smith—who apparently didn't recognize them—and gave investigators a copy of their photo, Harran said. Later Sunday, a detective went around to local apartment complexes looking for Smith and spotted him, Harran said.

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Good Housekeeping



THE WASHINGTON POST

It's a relief knowing that not everything is becoming too expensive. The Lagoon lamps from the Sundance catalog are as refreshing in appearance as they are in price. See story for details.

Chic lamps won't cost you a pretty penny

By TERRI SAPIENZA

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dance catalog are as refreshing in appearance as they are in price.

The translucent, blown-glass table lamps, available in Oceanic Blue or Moss Green, are \$125 and \$85, respectively. Linen shades included. To order, visit www.sundancecatalog.com.

Puzzled? Turn to these pages

By LIZ SEYMOUR

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between moss and mint green or Wedgwood and powder blue.

There is more text in "Farrow & Ball: The Art of Color" by Brian D. Coleman (Gibbs Smith, \$60). But most readers will put up with a few more words because the photographs are so big and lush. The shots might remind you of your favorite bed-and-breakfast, or elaborate movie sets reeking of Old Money.

A warning: Farrow and Ball is a British paint and wallpaper company, so make no mistake that this book is, unabashedly, product promotion. And the paint is at the high end in price. But the captions carefully identify the paint and names in each photo, and dreaming is free.

"Paint Style" by Lesley Riva (Firefly, \$26.95) is also a promotional book, this one from the makers of Benjamin Moore Paints. But it's more about painting techniques than actual color, making it a resource for the DIY painter interested in stencils, glazes, stippling, color rippling, painting floors and faux finishes. Benjamin Moore purists will also like this book because it categorizes many of its most popular colors by shade and labels the paint color and number on each page.

We set aside one day each year to
pay tribute to our mothers.
But that is not even enough to make up
for all the troubles we put them
through in the other 363 days.

Happy Mother's Day

From the management and staff of

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Peaceful, healthy coexistence of plants and dogs

By JOEL M. LERNER, APLD
SPECIAL TO THE WASHINGTON POST

WASHINGTON—Those who love both their dogs and their gardens often seek ways to protect their plants from the stress of daily dog traffic.

There are no dog-proof plants. If flora is frequently trampled, you can expect torn leaves, broken branches and mud, especially in smaller yards. But there are techniques to help dogs and beautiful gardens happily coexist.

My preferred solution is to separate the dog from the garden. Other options include taking pets to obedience school and creating a naturalistic design using tough ground covers, perennials, shrubs and trees and simply adopting a "survival of the fittest" mentality regarding plants.

Sometimes a sturdy fence is the only answer, but even an 18-inch-high wire fence can ruin the look of a garden and can discourage only small dogs. Instead, for small dogs, consider installing an



THE WASHINGTON POST
Shasta daisies, above, are a sturdy plant that can stand up to some pet traffic. Other plants, such as black-eyed Susan, below, also have stout character and will retain flowering value while your pet romps.

18- to 24-inch-tall picket fence to enclose a perennial and shrub garden. Plants along the pet side of the fence still need to withstand paw traffic. Remember that dogs can dig under fences, so install the fence into the soil or add a rock barrier at the base.

Other dog-loving gardeners look for more attractive options. Alain and Valeria Roman, of Rockville, Md., rely on an "ugly" stiff wire fence to hold back their Labrador retriever and St. Bernard from their plants, but they plan to build a retaining wall to limit where the dogs go. Flowers will be above and behind the wall, on the opposite and sunny side of the yard, out of the dogs' direct path.

Pets like to explore, and it's in a dog's nature to patrol borders, including fences. Plant flowers and vegetables in raised planters with mulched or grassy paths between them. Leave buffer zones between plants, walls and fences. Mulched paths can

be used to guide pets to locations away from beds to play or to take care of other business. If a path network is not extensive, use pavers, which will be smooth on dogs' paws.

If your pet loves the garden, plant sturdy flora where it likes to tread. Black-eyed Susan has a stout character and will retain flowering value while your pet romps. Others include verbena, shasta daisy, liatris, peony, butterfly weed, Russian sage, raspberry and viburnum, as well as small flowering trees like styrax, halesia, fringe tree and eastern redbud. For information about other plants that can better tolerate foot traffic, check out Stepables.com, the Web site of a company that specializes in such plants.

Most pet owners know lawn chemicals can be harmful to their dogs and cats, but many forget that some plant material can be toxic to animals.

Sometimes animals know which leaves and berries to avoid, but don't count on it. We had a client whose dog ate the foliage and berries of a Carol Mackie Daphne. The plant's sap is caustic and can burn the mouth and irritate an animal's stomach.

Other plants to avoid include yew, wild black cherry, azalea, rhododendron, hydrangea, nandina, oleander, English ivy, daffodil, tulip, lily of the valley, foxglove, hyacinth, rhubarb and castor bean. A longer list of toxic plants can be found at www.cybercanine.com/toxicplants.htm.

If you already have some of these plants, minimize exposure by fencing them off, if possible.

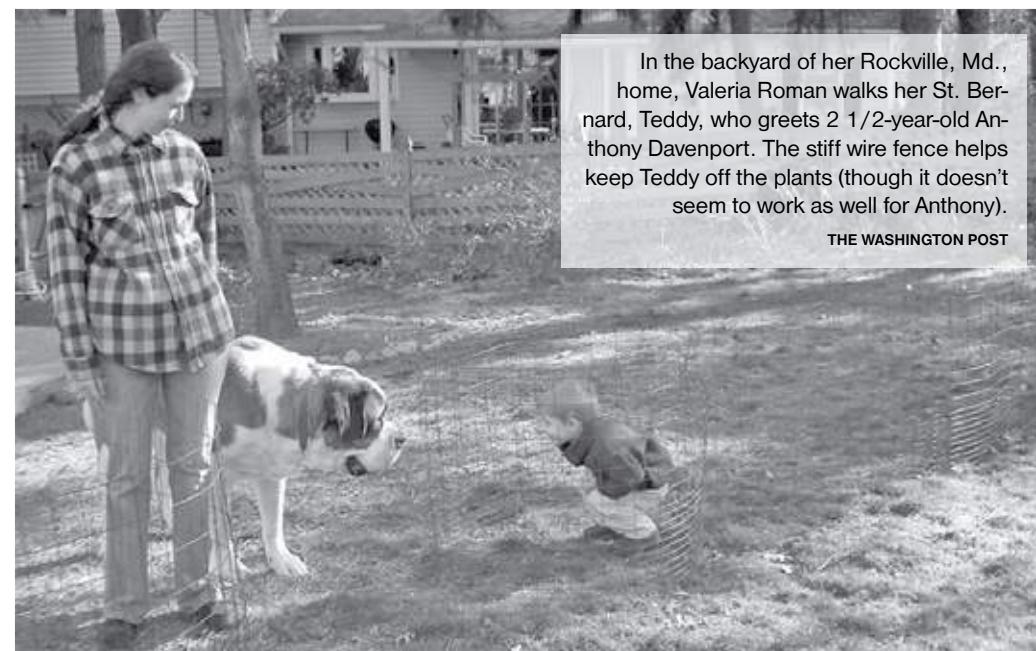
Avoid tying dogs to trees. It can kill the tree and create an aggressive animal. And don't leave dogs out for too long. When a dog begins to dig to find a comfortable spot, it's been in the yard too long. Make sure your pet has an area of soft lawn or shaded soil for lying outside.

Pull weeds by hand, and use caution with any chemicals. Look for products promoted as pet-safe. Organic isn't necessarily the best approach. For example, one organic method of adding phosphorus to the soil uses pulverized bone meal. Dogs love bones, but the bone meal could make them sick depending on the origin of the bones and any ingredients that have been added to the fertilizer.

Dog owners should also avoid cocoa bean mulch. It is a byproduct of chocolate manufacturing and contains both caffeine and theobromine, both of which are harmful to dogs. Coffee grounds may be good for your soil, but they're not good for your dog, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association.

If a potentially more harmful substance is required for the health of your garden, keep pets away from areas being treated. "The First Aid Companion for Dogs and Cats," by Amy D. Shojai (Rodale, 2001, \$20), suggests keeping pets off sprayed surfaces for a week.

If you use a pest-control company, make sure the worker



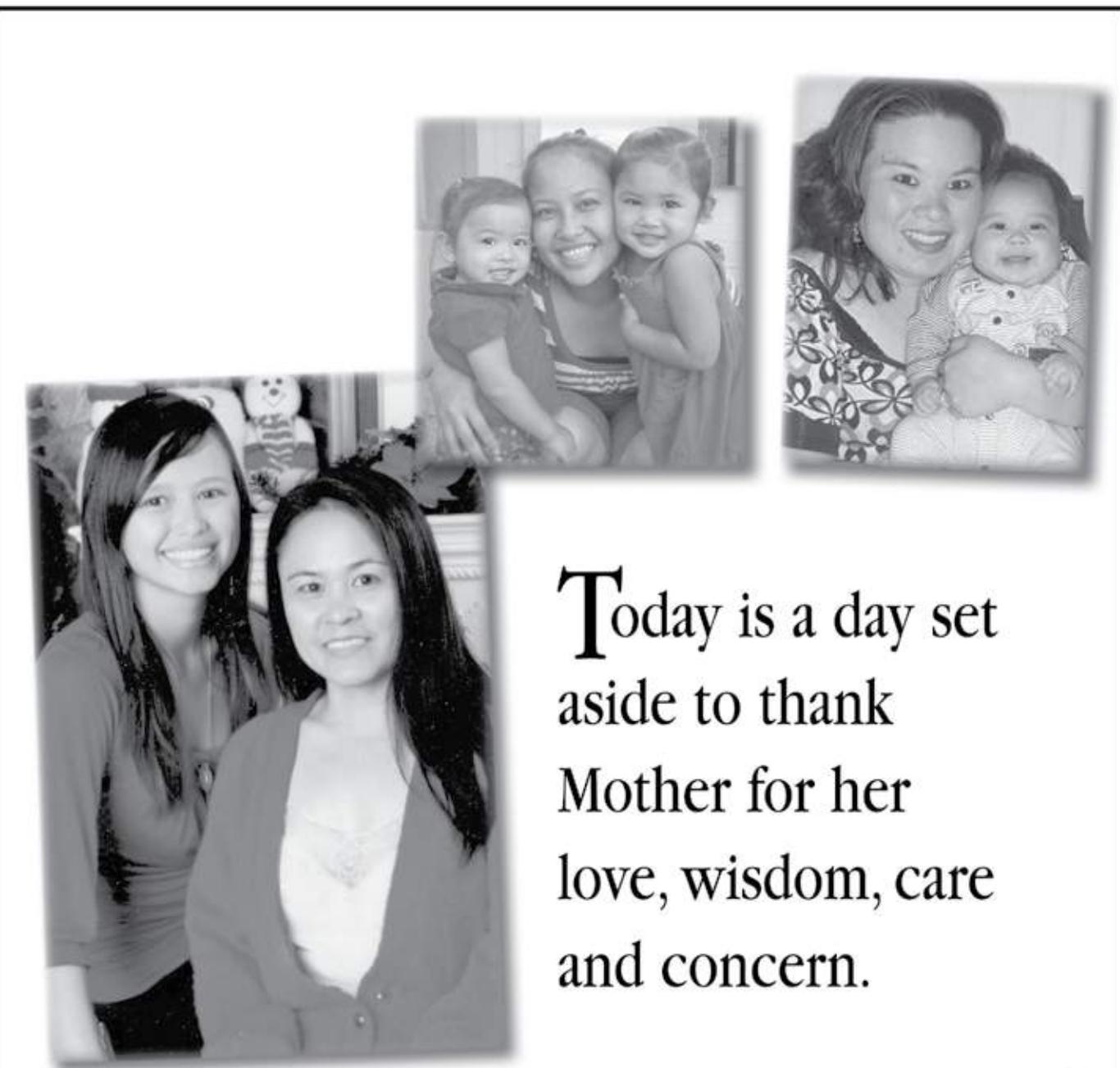
In the backyard of her Rockville, Md., home, Valeria Roman walks her St. Bernard, Teddy, who greets 2 1/2-year-old Anthony Davenport. The stiff wire fence helps keep Teddy off the plants (though it doesn't seem to work as well for Anthony).

THE WASHINGTON POST

knows you have pets and uses the safest pesticide or containment system. Watch pets while they're outside, and keep them away from containers.

If you think your pet has ingested or contacted something dangerous, isolate it and try to find the substance. If a plant, determine what part—seeds, berries or foliage. If a pesticide or herbicide, locate the container. Call a veterinarian or pet emergency center immediately. One resource is the National Animal Poison Control Center, which is staffed 24 hours a day. To reach it, call 800-548-2423. There is a consultation fee that may require a credit card.

Lerner is president of Environmental Design in Capitol View Park, Md., and author of *Anyone Can Landscape* (Ball 2001). Contact him through his Web site, www.gardenerner.com.



Today is a day set aside to thank
Mother for her
love, wisdom, care
and concern.

Happy Mother's Day!

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The Good Life

By BRIGID SCHULTE
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WASHINGTON—On the day that Jamie Robyn Thompson was to share her 14th birthday celebration with family and the woman who gave birth to her, a movie spoofing surrogate mothers as trashy opportunists opened, and the news was rife with stories of infertile women “outsourcing” childbirth to poor women in India.

Kim Kovacic, Jamie’s surrogate mother, is none of those things. And recently, at a suburban restaurant, there were balloons, presents and a “Happy Birthday Jamie and Kim” ice cream cake.

Fourteen years ago, Kovacic, a married, middle-class mother of three, signed a \$15,000 contract with Carol Van Cleef and Doug Thompson to carry the embryo that their sperm and egg had created in a petri dish. On her 35th birthday, Kovacic gave birth to Jamie. The two families, without a second thought or a hint of awkwardness, have celebrated together every year since.

In technical terms, Kovacic was a “gestational carrier” for Carol and Doug, the “intended parents.” Kovacic, 49, short and easygoing with an impish



THE WASHINGTON POST

Kim Kovacic and Jamie Thompson, at right, talk at their shared birthday celebration at a Reston, Va., restaurant. Also at the dinner table are, clockwise from rear, Jamie’s biological mother Carol Van Cleef, brother Peter and biological father Doug Thompson; and Kovacic’s daughters Lauren and Lisa.

‘Test-tube baby’ is doubly blessed, with loving parents and a surrogate mother

sense of humor, and Van Cleef, 52, a tall, willowy, self-described type-A partner in a major law firm, couldn’t be more different. But theirs is an intimate bond of flesh and bone, forged in science and the ancient yearning for a child that society has yet to find the words to describe, much less understand.

Kovacic brought two of her own daughters to the birthday dinner. The girls gushed about movies and bands and teased Jamie’s brother, Peter, 17. Jamie mentioned that she would be singing soprano in her upcoming chorus concert.

Kovacic looked at Van Cleef and raised an eyebrow. “I know she didn’t get that from either one of us, did she?”

Kovacic, of suburban Herndon, Va., has baby-sat Jamie, attended her graduations, school performances and confirmation. But the one thing she clearly isn’t is Jamie’s mother.

“I feel a special bond with her, and I’m very proud of her, but I don’t feel like she’s my child. It’s kind of hard to explain,” Kovacic said.

When she was pregnant with Jamie, people indignantly asked her how she could give her baby away. But in Kovacic’s mind, she was giving Carol and Doug their baby BACK: “I would tell people, well, when you baby-sit kids, do you want to keep them?”

Surrogate motherhood has been around since at least biblical times, when Sarah gave her maid, Hagar, to Abraham to have a child for her. By the 1980s, surrogate mothers typically used their own eggs and were artificially inseminated with the sperm of the would-be father. But the result was sometimes messy. In one of the first legal chal-



THE WASHINGTON POST

Jamie Thompson and her surrogate mother, Kim Kovacic, share a birthday cake at a family celebration at a restaurant in Reston, Va. By coincidence, Jamie was born on Kovacic’s 35th birthday.

lenges involving surrogacy, Mary Beth Whitehead changed her mind halfway through her surrogate pregnancy and wanted to keep the baby. The ensuing court battle over the parentage of “Baby M” played like a Greek tragedy.

Today, most surrogates are implanted with the genetic embryo of an infertile couple or with a donor egg. Although there have been a few high-profile celebrity surrogacies—for Dennis Quaid, Angela Bassett and Joan Lunden, for example—the practice accounts for less than 1 percent of all births by assisted reproductive technologies. And because the procedure is relatively rare, and con-

demned by some religious traditions, many people aren’t sure what to think.

“When people find out I’ve had a surrogate baby, their reaction is, ‘Wow, you seem so normal,’ ” Kovacic said.

Some states ban surrogacies in which a surrogate would use her own egg. Others, including New York and Utah, ban surrogacy altogether, as do many foreign countries. In Washington, Jamie’s contracted birth would have been punishable by a \$10,000 fine and a year in jail. But in California, Massachusetts and Maryland, a surrogate carrying the genetic child of the intended parents can waive her parental rights while still

pregnant so that the intended parents’ names are on the birth certificate.

Under Virginia law, passed in 1994 just weeks before Jamie’s birth, surrogates must be married and can carry only the genetic child of married intended parents. To avert baby selling, the law allows Virginia surrogates to receive payment only for ancillary living expenses. Genetic mothers can have birth certificates reissued with their names after delivery by filing DNA tests, as Van Cleef, of McLean, did.

Tired of the ambivalence, the Hollywood movie stereotypes and the media coverage that seems to report only when surrogacy goes wrong, Kovacic and Van Cleef wanted to share their story as a counterpoint.

“There’s no shame in it,” Van Cleef said. “And it provides an opportunity to have a family in a way that you envisioned a family.”

Their story began May 23, 1990, when Van Cleef almost died giving birth to her firstborn, Peter. Hours before, while she was in labor with Peter, she and Doug had decided they wanted three children. But complications arose, and doctors had to perform an emergency hysterectomy. Van Cleef had the presence of mind to ask them to spare her ovaries. “As they were wheeling me back to the recovery room,” Van Cleef said, “I thought, ‘Hey, I can still do a surrogacy.’ ”

About the same time, Kovacic was delivering her first surrogate baby. Appalled by the Whitehead case, and blessed by three easy pregnancies via C-section, Kovacic decided to help someone who was unable to conceive. She went through an agency in Mary-

land and was paid \$10,000 to carry another couple’s child.

She viewed her pregnancy as another part-time job—she has worked for the same pediatrician for almost 30 years. And the money did help as her then-husband’s hunting store struggled. But the money is something she still feels guilty about.

“To be honest, I wish I could have done it and not taken money for it,” Kovacic said. “It’s like when you give someone a gift, you know they’re going to love it, and you can’t wait to see the look on their faces when they open it. That’s the ultimate.”

Her friends were not surprised. Kovacic is the kind of person who bakes cupcakes for her roommates on the maternity ward after they return home, volunteers for everything and, as her children were growing up, enforced “Random Acts of Kindness” Fridays.

But she has never seen the first surrogate baby nor heard from the parents again, other than receiving a note expressing that they would be “forever grateful.”

So Kovacic wasn’t sure what to expect when a recruiter in Maryland put her in touch with Van Cleef. Van Cleef wasn’t sure either, but the two instantly liked each other. In October 1992, each began hormone injections to get their cycles in sync. And in August 1993, on the second try, Kovacic became pregnant with Carol and Doug’s child.

Lisa Kovacic, 22, a senior at the University of Virginia, remembers the startled looks when she told people that her mother was having a baby she wouldn’t keep. “I remember my mom, from Day One, explaining how she wanted to give someone something big,” she said, “And what better gift can you give someone than a child? Their child.”

Van Cleef accompanied Kovacic on most of her doctor appointments. She was there for the sonogram that showed that the baby was a girl. The two began talking frequently on the phone, and Van Cleef’s mother threw a shower for them. When the baby was born, Van Cleef was the first one to hold her.

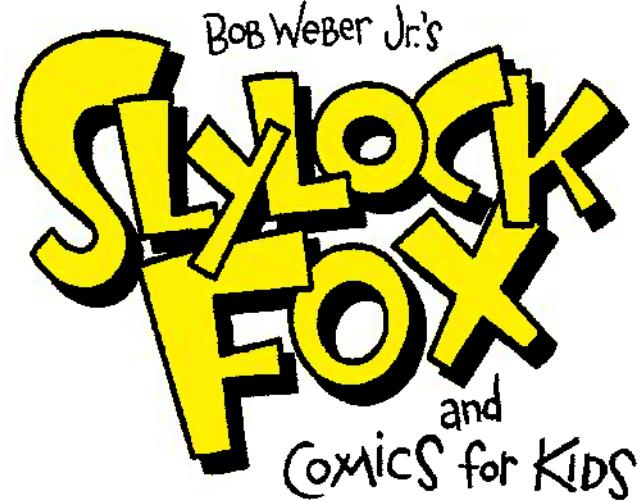
“I got to feel like a father does when a child is born,” Van Cleef said. Before leaving the hospital with their daughter, Carol and Doug gave Kovacic a necklace with a gold heart.

From the earliest days, Van Cleef made sure Jamie knew where she came from. She would show her pictures of the two women and ask “Where’s Mommy?” Jamie would point to Van Cleef. She’d ask, “Where’s Jamie?” And Jamie would point and say, “In Kimmy’s tummy.”

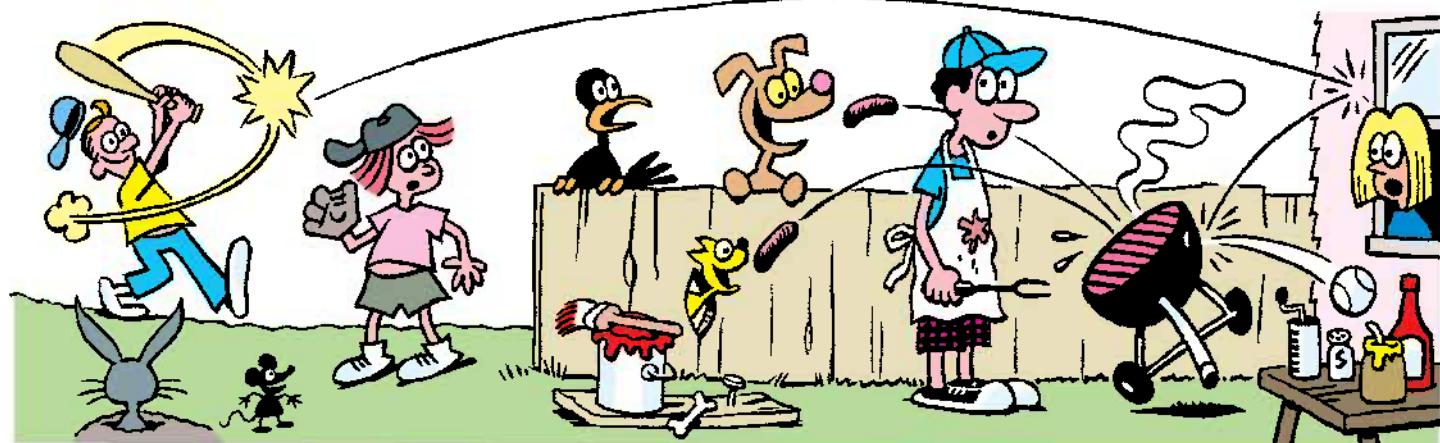
At the birthday dinner, Jamie laughed when she recalled being asked one year at summer camp what made her special. The only thing she could think to say was, “I’m a test-tube baby.”

The facts of her birth are not something Jamie thinks about much. “I can’t really remember how I felt about it when I was younger, but now that I’m older, I can see from my mother’s point of view how much she wanted a daughter,” Jamie said. “It helps me realize, it doesn’t really matter how I was born and that my mother didn’t actually carry me. But it does matter that I am here. I am born.”

And so, in the din of the restaurant, as an unknowing and uncomprehending world looked on, Jamie the miracle baby and Kim blew out their birthday candles.



How many things in this scene begin with the letter B?



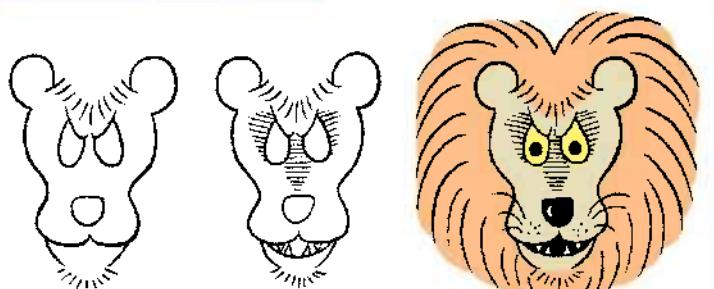
Answer -- Bat, ball, boy, brush, bunny, break, bird, bouquet and board. Any more?

Someone siphoned gas from several forest citizens' cars a short while ago. Slylock Fox suspects Shady Shrew is the gas-sucking scoundrel. But Shady asks, "Why would I pay for a fill-up if I already have a supply of stolen gas?" Slylock has an answer, do you?

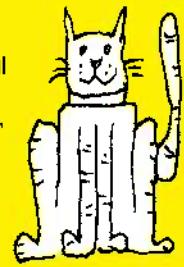
Solution -- The meter on the gas pump shows only one gallon of gas was pur-chased. Shady's so-called "fill-up" was just a lopping off on a nearly full tank of stolen gas. Shady went to the station just to appear innocent.



HOW TO DRAW a lion



YOUR DRAWING



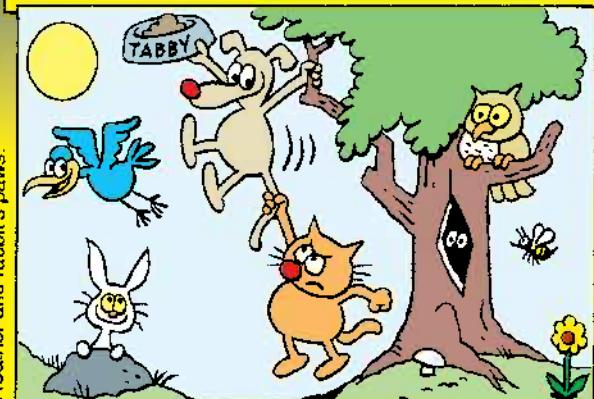
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The first car radio was invented in ...

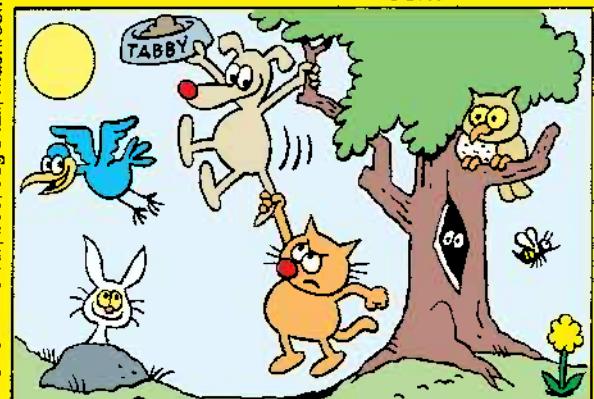
- a) 1918
- b) 1923
- c) 1929
- d) 1932
- e) 1940

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Find six differences between these panels.



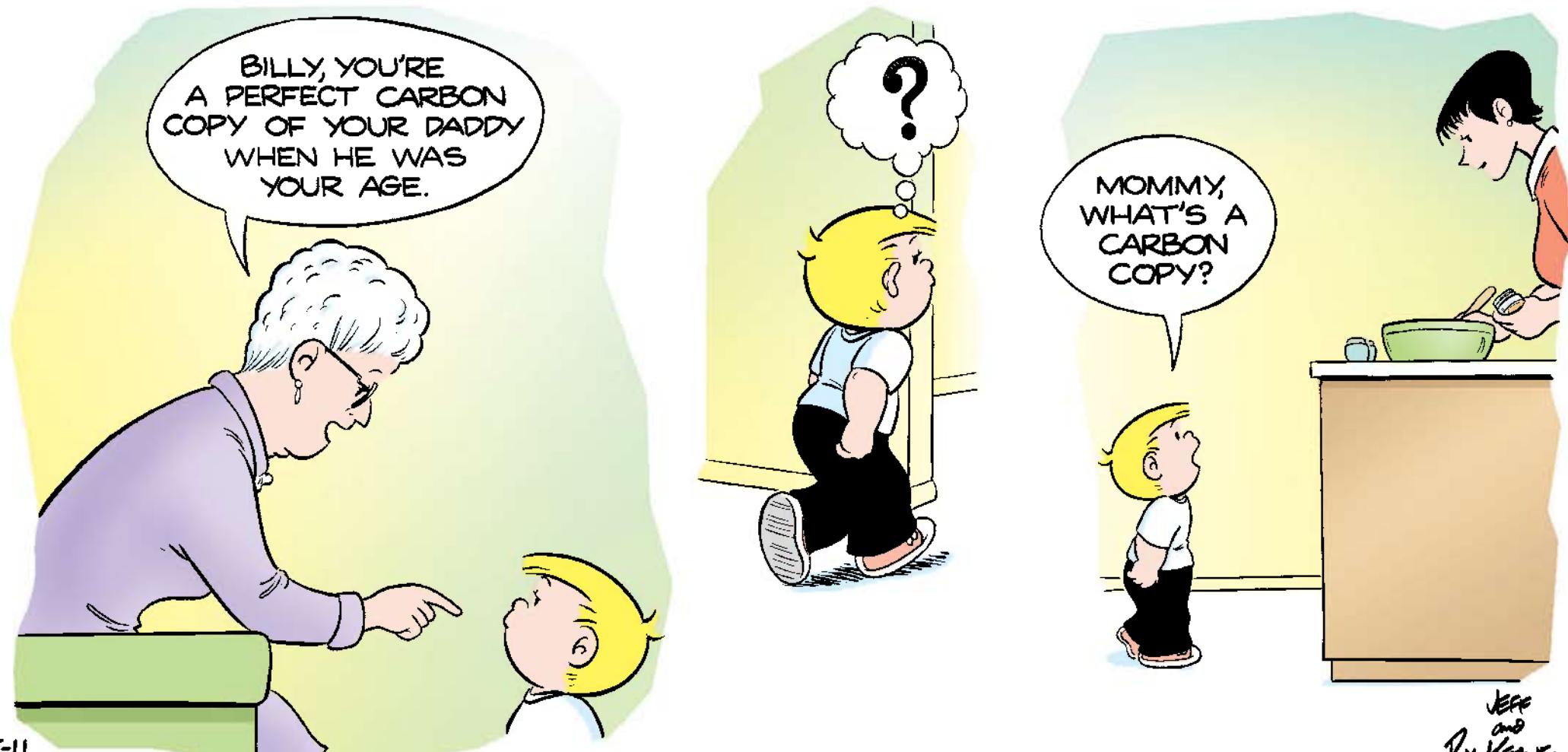
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New! The fourth **Find the six differences** collection is here. Send \$4 (check/money order in U.S. funds made payable to King Features) with your name and address to **Six Differences No. 4**, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475.

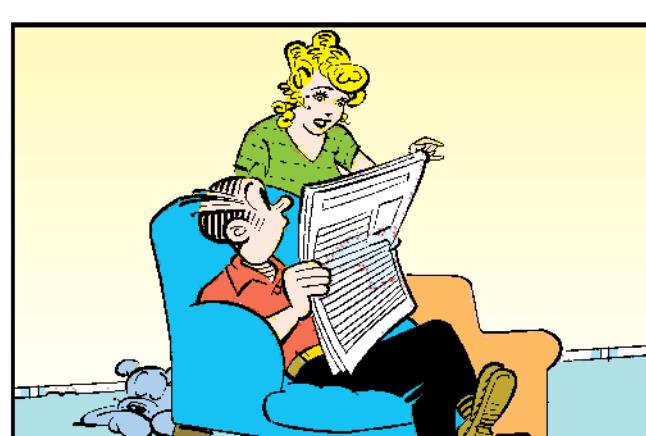
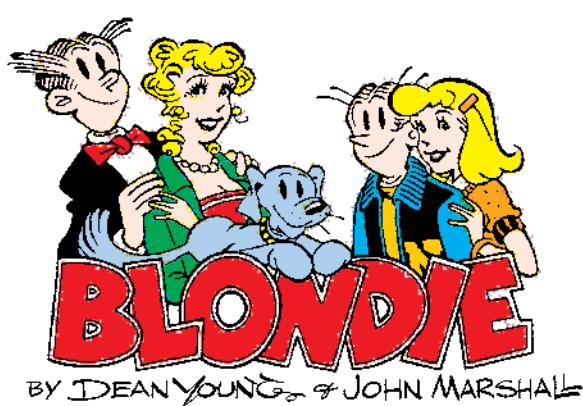
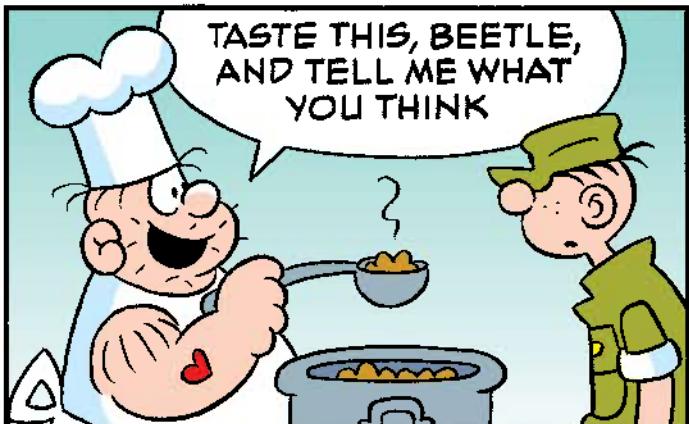
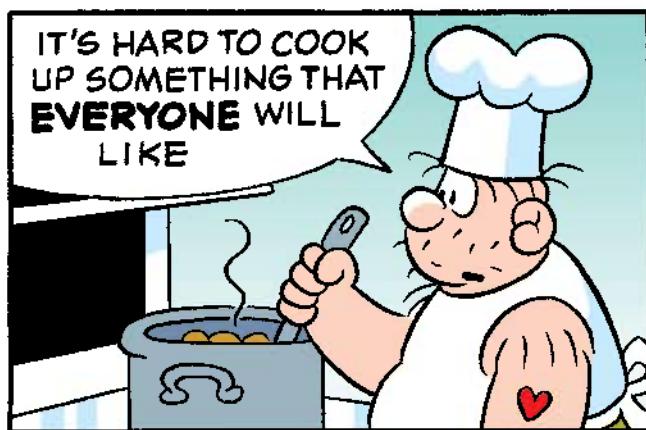
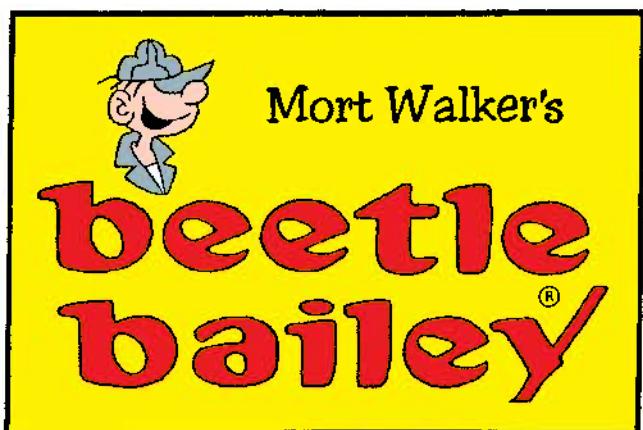
THE FAMILY CIRCUS®

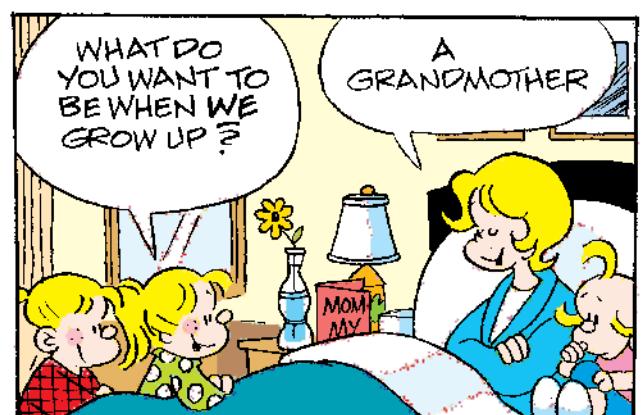
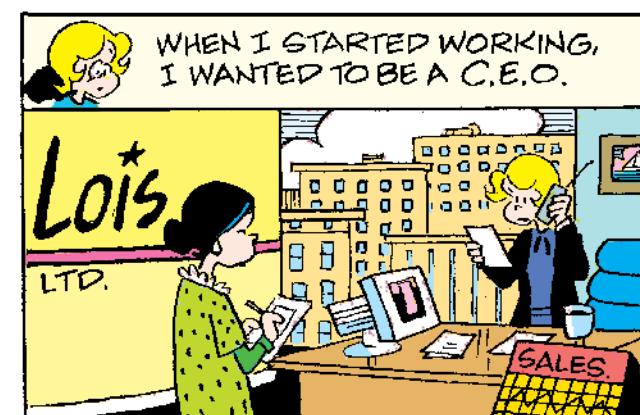
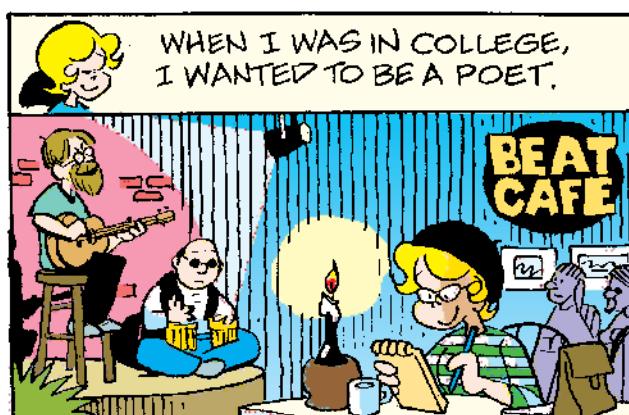
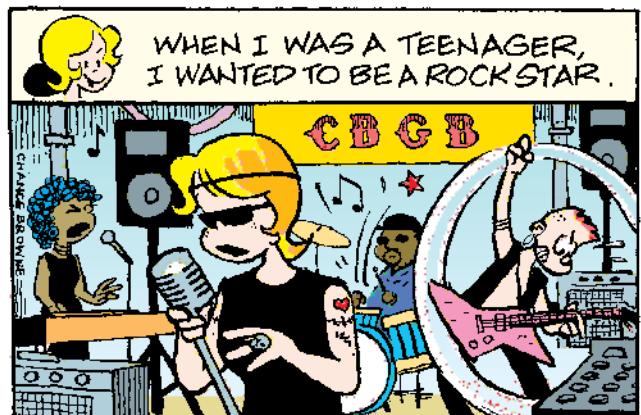
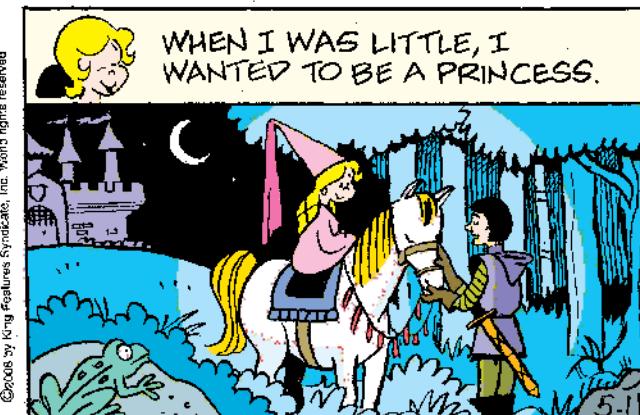
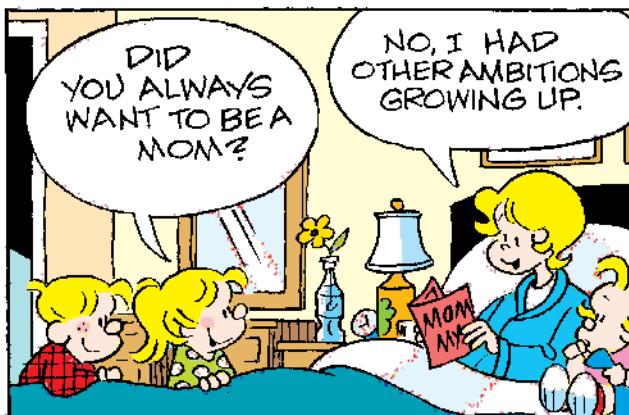
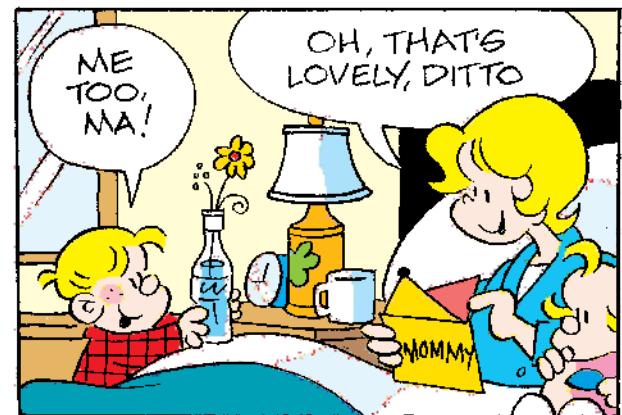
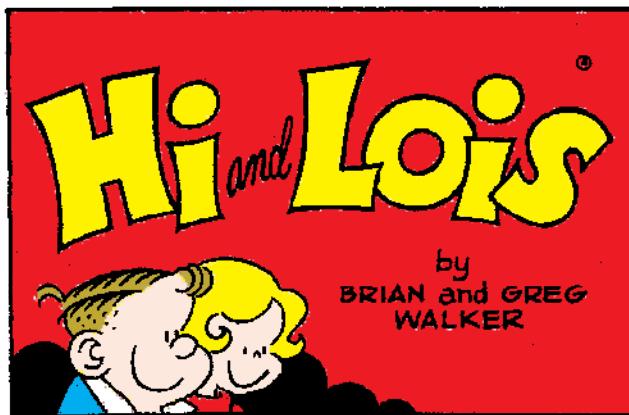
By Bill Keane



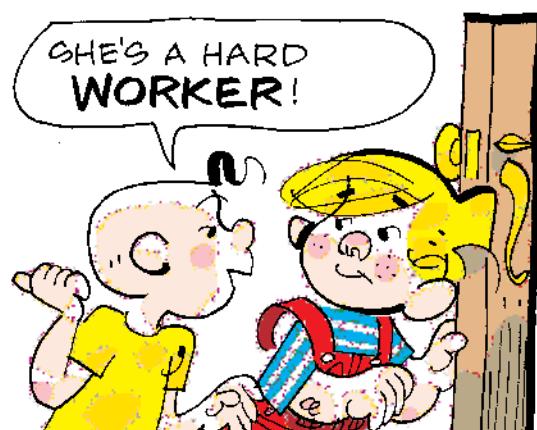
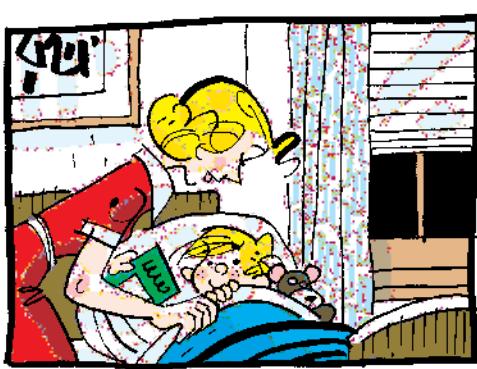
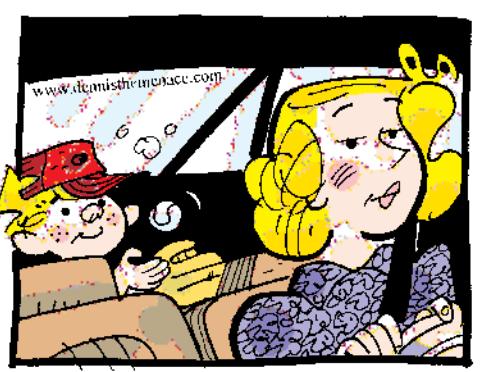
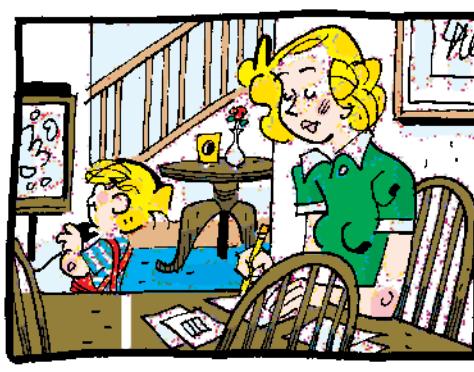
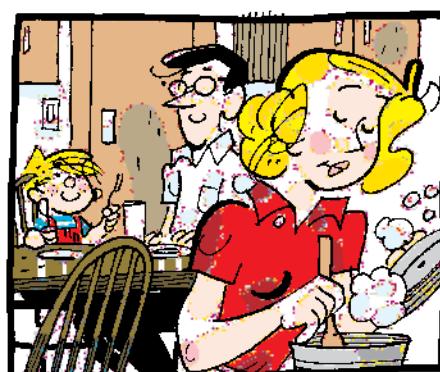
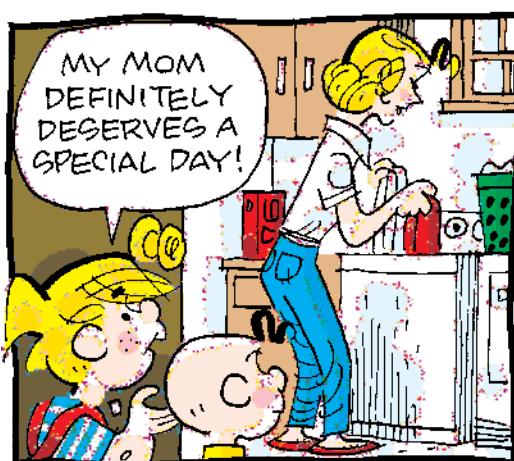
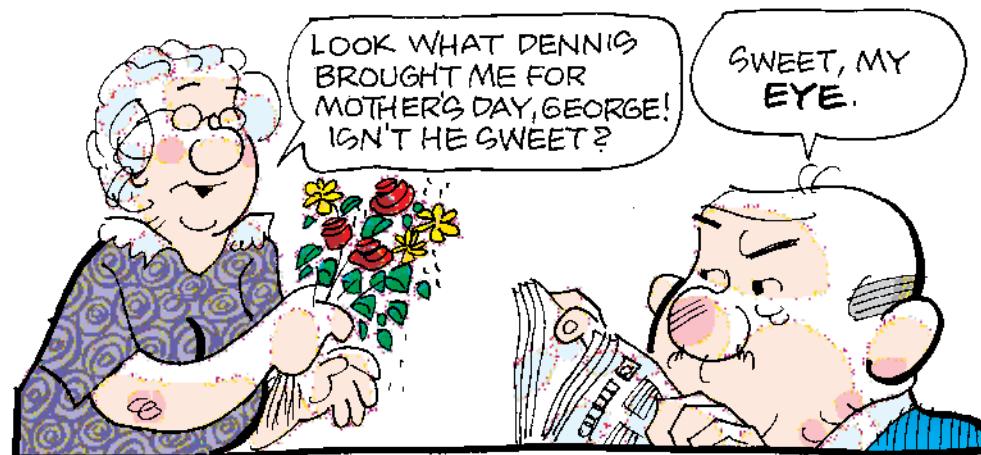
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Hank Ketcham





Salome's Stars

ARIES (March 21 to April 19) You've set a fast pace for yourself. But as you approach your goal, you might want to slow down a bit in order to take time to reassess your situation and make changes while you can.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20) Patience continues to be a virtue for the Divine Bull. So as eager as you might be to get things moving, remember that time is on your side. Make good use of it.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20) There's a wee bit of uncertainty in the early part of the week. But things clear up as more facts come to light. Spend quality time this weekend with family and friends.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22) An old friend's return could open new possibilities for both of you. But don't let yourself be rushed into anything. There could be some factors you haven't yet explored.

LEO (July 23 to August 22) This week offers a challenge you're raring to take on. And while eager to get started, do so slowly so that you can focus those sharp Cat's Eyes on every detail.

VIRGO (August 23 to September 22) Put your skepticism aside and listen to advice from colleagues who've been where you are now. What they say could be helpful as you get closer to a decision.



LIBRA (September 23 to October 22) A family matter might again require your reassuring touch. Handle it, as always, with kindness and fairness, even if some of your kin prove to be especially difficult.

SCORPIO (October 23 to November 21) Your ability to tackle even the most intricate details of a project is likely to impress some very important people. A relative shares news later this week.

SAGITTARIUS (November 22 to December 21) The Archer's aim might be focused on the big picture this week, but don't overlook checking for those details you might have missed.

CAPRICORN (December 22 to January 19) You might feel awkward asking for assistance, but who would refuse the charming Goat's request? Do it, then go ahead and enjoy a musical weekend.

AQUARIUS (January 20 to February 18) Pour some cold water on that simmering misunderstanding before it boils over. The sooner things settle, the sooner you can move ahead with your plans.

PISCES (February 19 to March 20) You're in a highly productive period, which you feel can go on forever. But you could be courting exhaustion. Take time out to relax and restore your energies.

BORN THIS WEEK: You can combine a sense of adventure with a penchant for practicality. Have you considered a travel-related field?

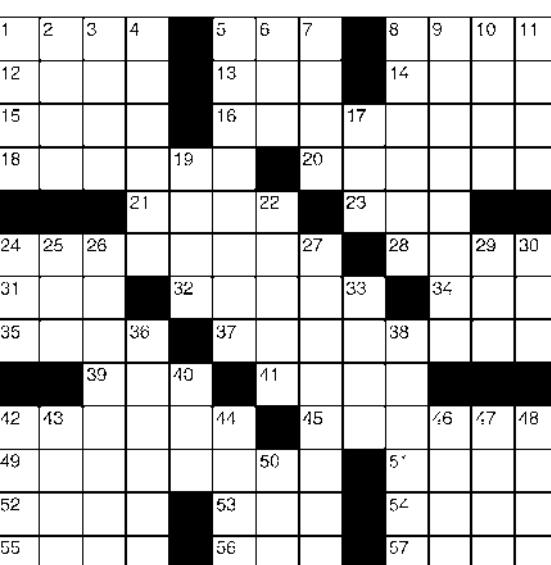
ACROSS

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
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DOWN

1	Mongolian	destroyer	30	Tiny
2	desert	Chinch	33	Vortex
4	One-dimensional	Columbus'	36	Sports
5	Monty —	sponsor	venues	
7	Portrayer of	10	Colorize	
9	Gilligan's	Hay bundle	40	"Humbug!"
11	skipper	11	Diane or	
13	Domesticate	Took to court	Nathan	
15	Zilch, in	17	Listener	
17	Xochimilco	19	Little	
19	Caribbean,	22	"Pomp and	
21	for one	composers	Circumstance"	
23		24	Allen or	
25		25	Conway	
27		26	Alias abbr.	
29		28	Summertime	
31		29	beverage	
33			From the	
35			Continent	
37			Lubricate	

King Crossword



ACROSS

1 Mentor
5 Bro or sis
8 Chest protectors?
12 Candid
13 Dead heat
14 Jacob's brother
15 "Death of a Salesman" son
16 Terrier variety
18 Just know
20 Ran up the phone bill
21 Libertine
23 Regret
24 Yarn
28 Radiate
31 Eisenhower
32 Battle verbally
34 Golf ball's position
35 Porridge-making bear
37 Get-rid-of-junk event
39 Sphere
41 Took the bus
42 One-dimensional
45 Monty —
49 Portrayer of Gilligan's skipper
51 Domesticate
52 Zilch, in Xochimilco
53 Caribbean, for one

DOWN

1 Mongolian desert
2 — arms (ready to fight)
3 Plundered
4 Spread out, as a flag
5 Sculptures
6 Square root of IX
7 Titanic

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top ten

Most Sold Flowers Worldwide

1. Rose
2. Chrysanthemum
3. Tulip
4. Lily
5. Carnation
6. Gerbera
7. Freesia
8. Orchid
9. Peruvian Lily
10. Baby's-breath

Source: www.theflowerexpert.com

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KING CROSSWORD LAST SUNDAY'S ANSWERS

ALMA	SOW	SHAG
GAIN	CHA	TOPE
HOLDFAST	ELSE	
ASSERT	EVADES	
SET	RAMS	
BACHEEL	NEWSY	
BLOB	ROB	RAKE
CALLA	SOP	YIN
DOLE	ORT	
PROSIT	TOUPEE	
LAWS	HOLDBACK	
OREO	ENE	ACRE
PERM	LOG	STUD

United States

Obama picks up 9 superdelegates

WASHINGTON (AP)—Barack Obama all but erased Hillary Rodham Clinton's once-imposing lead among national convention superdelegates on Friday and won fresh labor backing as elements of the Democratic Party began coalescing around the Illinois senator for the fall campaign.

Obama picked up the backing of nine superdelegates, including Rep. Donald Payne of New Jersey, a member of the Congressional Black Caucus who had been a Clinton supporter.

In addition, the American Federation of Government Employees announced its support for Obama. The union claims about 600,000 members who work in the federal and Washington, D.C., governments.

Obama, who won a convincing victory in the North Carolina primary and lost Indiana narrowly on Tuesday, has been steadily gaining strength in the days since.

"I'm gratified that we've got some superdelegates who are coming our way. And I think



Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Barack Obama, D-Ill., speaks while campaigning in Albany, Ore., Friday, May 9, 2008.

we've got a strong case to make that I will be a nominee that can pull the party together and take on John McCain. Our focus has always been on the pledged delegates and just getting the American people to vote for us.

perdelegates, to 271 for Obama. Little more than four months ago,

on the eve of the primary season, she held a lead of 169-63.

Superdelegates are party leaders who attend the convention delegates by virtue of their positions, and are not selected in primaries and caucuses.

In an interview with National Public Radio, former candidate John Edwards said Clinton has made a compelling case for her candidacy, but "I think it's very hard for her now to make a compelling case for the math. I mean, I think that's the reality of what she's faced with. She knows that. ... It's just very hard to see how the math works."

Records show Sharpton owes overdue taxes, other penalties

NEW YORK (AP)—Big corporations give him money. Presidential candidates seek his endorsement. He has influential friends in Congress and the governor's mansion. The Rev. Al Sharpton has emerged over the past decade as perhaps the nation's most prominent civil rights leader, a status that was demonstrated again this week when he led protests against police brutality that briefly shut down six of Manhattan's major bridges and tunnels.

But he still carries baggage from his early days as a fire-breathing agitator: Government records obtained by The Associated Press indicate that Sharpton and his business entities owe nearly \$1.5 million in overdue taxes and associated penalties.

Now the U.S. attorney is investigating his nonprofit group, a probe that an undeterred Sharpton brushes off as the kind of annoyance that civil rights figures have come to expect from the government.

ACROSS THE NATION

Kids, mom lived with 90-year-old's corpse for weeks in Wis.

MADISON, Wis. (AP)—Two children and their mother lived for about two months with the decaying body of a 90-year-old woman on the toilet of their home's only bathroom, on the advice of a religious "superior" who claimed the corpse would come back to life, authorities said Friday. The children—a 15-year-old girl and a 12-year-old boy—cried hysterically Wednesday after a deputy who came to their Necedah home looking for Magdalene Alvina Middlesworth ordered them out because of the stench from her body. The children were in foster care Friday. Their mother, Tammy Lewis, and self-described "bishop" Alan Bushey remained in custody on felony counts of being a party to causing mental harm to a child. "It's a sad case, and we'll continue to investigate it and try to ascertain just what occurred up there," Juneau County Sheriff Brent Oleson said. He said he had no further information on Bushey's religious affiliation.

Military considering new cremation policies

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Pentagon is recommending changes in the handling of troops' remains, after it was revealed that a crematorium contracted by the military handles both human and animal cremations. A military official said there have been no instances or charges that human and pet remains were mixed. But officials are now recommending that troops' remains be incinerated only at facilities that are dedicated entirely to humans, in order to avoid any appearance of a problem. Or, officials said, families can opt to have a relative's remains sent to a local funeral home for cremation, which would be paid for by the military. Defense Secretary Robert Gates believed the earlier situation was "insensitive and entirely inappropriate for the dignified treatment of our fallen," said Pentagon press secretary Geoff Morrell.

NC officials: Fatal twister could have been worse

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP)—Amber Parker watched on television as the storm near her home grew into a tornado threat. Then, when the roaring wind outside suddenly fell silent, she grabbed her two toddlers and rushed to get under the stairwell. "We just got inside the door frame when I was pushed inside ... then everything went," said Parker, tears welling in her eyes as she described the chaotic scene during a brief discussion with reporters near her demolished home in central North Carolina. Neighbors helped the 36-year-old Parker and her two children—a 2-year-old and a 3-year-old—out of the ruins that used to be their home, and the three survived with barely a scratch. "We're blessed," she said. The powerful storm system that swept through the Southeast and the mid-Atlantic states late Thursday and into early Friday produced two tornadoes. In North Carolina, the storm left one person dead, several injured and scores of homes and businesses damaged.



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Asia

Aid is on the way to devastated Myanmar

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—More aid is on the way to cyclone-ravaged Myanmar—but so is the heavy rain.

A week after Cyclone Nargis flattened low-lying villages and killed whole families at a time, the military junta finally agreed Friday to allow a U.S. cargo plane to bring in food and other supplies to the isolated country. Myanmar gave the green light after confiscating other shipments, prompting the U.N. to order a temporary freeze in shipments.

The U.N. agreed to resume flights but relief workers, including Americans, were still being barred entry.

With phone lines down, roads blocked and electricity networks destroyed, it was nearly impossible to reach isolated areas in the swamped Irrawaddy delta, where the stench of unburied and decaying bodies added to the misery.

Heavy rain that is forecast in the next week is certain to worsen the plight of almost 2 million people awaiting food, clean water, shelter and medicine.

Diplomats and aid groups warned that the number of dead could eventually exceed



Myanmar residents walk past houses destroyed by Cyclone Nargis in Bogalay, Myanmar, on Friday May 9, 2008.

100,000 because of illness and said thousands of children may have been orphaned.

Survivors in one of the worst-affected areas, near the town of Bogalay about 20 miles inland, were among those fighting hunger, illness and wrenching loneliness.

"All my 28 family members have died," said Thein Myint, a 68-year-old fisherman who was overcome by tears and trauma as he tried to explain

how the May 3 cyclone swept away the rest of his family. "I am the only survivor."

Officials have said only one out of 10 people who are homeless, injured or threatened by disease and hunger have received some kind of aid in the week since the cyclone hit.

Survivors were sleeping amid the debris of their splintered homes in Bogalay, where more than 95 percent of the houses were destroyed.

US offering to help China in fight against viral infection

BEIJING (AP)—The United States is offering to help China in its fight against a viral infection that has killed 34 children, including two reported Friday, and sickened thousands of others.

Health and Human Services Secretary Mike Leavitt is making a previously scheduled trip to Beijing next week and plans to discuss health issues with Chinese officials, with the outbreaks of hand, foot and mouth disease expected to feature prominently, U.S.

Embassy spokesman Susan Stevenson said.

The scope and volume of infections brings to mind the SARS epidemic of 2003, when China was criticized internationally for trying to conceal the emergence of the disease. American health experts have previously helped study and control infectious diseases like SARS.

Chinese officials have said the outbreaks will not affect the Beijing Olympics in August. Preparations already have been marred

by unrest in Tibet and demonstrations against China's human rights record during the Olympic torch relay around the world.

The latest deaths occurred in the hardest-hit central province of Anhui, where 22 children have died of hand, foot and mouth disease, the provincial health bureau said on its Web site.

It said serious cases, however, were on the decline in Fuyang city, the site of the most infections and where the first wave of outbreaks was recorded.

officials. Supporters claimed the accusations were politically motivated. Senior security official Arif Ahmed Khan said charges against Mengal have been withdrawn. Pakistan's newly elected civilian government says it wants to promote dialogue with ethnic leaders in impoverished Baluchistan, scene of a long-running insurgency.

RP military chief orders court martial of army general in alleged recruitment scam

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine armed forces chief has ordered the court martial of a senior general who allegedly extorted money from recruits wanting to bypass army screening, a military spokesman said Friday. Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said Maj. Gen. Jose Barbierto, who headed an infantry division battling communist rebels and Muslim militants, will be charged with unauthorized recruitment of soldiers, unbecoming conduct and undermining military discipline. Barbierto and one of his subordinates, Staff Sgt. Roseller Echepare, have been suspended without pay pending a separate graft investigation by the Ombudsman, the civilian anti-corruption prosecutor. A number of ranking army officers accused Barbierto of demanding, through Echepare, between 25,000 and 30,000 pesos (US\$580 and US\$697; €377 and €454) from army applicants in exchange for guaranteed enlistment without needing to pass written and physical exams, the office of the Ombudsman said in a statement.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Sri Lanka election draws complaints

BATTICALOA, Sri Lanka (AP)—Separatist rebels destroyed a navy cargo ship Saturday just hours after a bombing blamed on the group killed 11 people in eastern Sri Lanka—violence that casted a cloud over pivotal provincial elections scheduled for later in the day. The government hailed the elections as a key step in restoring normalcy to the Eastern Province, which it freed from 13 years of Tamil Tiger rule last July. Sri Lanka's military said Tamil rebels bombed and sank a navy cargo ship in the eastern port town of Trincomalee early Saturday. Navy spokesman D.K.P. Dassanayake says the rebels attacked the ship with an underwater explosive about 2:15 a.m. He said no one was aboard and there were no injuries. On Friday, the opposition and independent observers raised questions about the polls, accusing the ruling party of misconduct in its effort to ensure a victory it sees as its rightful reward.

Pakistan frees ethnic leader

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP)—Pakistan's new government freed a prominent ethnic Baluch leader Friday as it tries to forge reconciliation in the restive southwest of the country. Jubilant supporters crowded Sardar Akhtar Mengal, chief of Baluchistan National Party, as he left a Karachi hospital, where he was detained because of ill health. Mengal was arrested in August 2006, accused of torturing two military intelligence of-

Across the Globe

Hezbollah sweeps over much of Beirut's Muslim sector

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP)—Unchallenged by Lebanon's army, the Iranian-backed Hezbollah routed Sunnis loyal to the U.S.-allied government and seized control of large swaths of Beirut's Muslim sector Friday in a telling demonstration of its military prowess.

The Shiite fighters' success in three days of street fighting dramatically strengthened the hand of the Hezbollah-led opposition in the bitter political struggle with pro-Western factions over who will guide the country.

But Hezbollah leaders signaled they weren't looking for a bloody showdown by pulling back their fighters late in the day. The group, and gunmen from allied groups, also steered clear of government buildings and made no attempt to advance toward Beirut's Christian area.

The Western-backed government, which holds only a small majority in parliament, and

opposition parties led by Hezbollah have been deadlocked for 17 months over the government's course.

Sporadic street clashes had broken out the past year. But combat erupted this week after the Cabinet sought to rein in Hezbollah by ordering the removal of an airport security chief with ties to the group and demanding the dismantling of the movement's private phone network.

The quick humiliation of Sunni fighters—who are far less organized than Hezbollah's militia—showed the Shiite group is more than strong enough to prevent actions it opposes.

At one point Friday, about 100 Hezbollah militants wearing matching camouflage uniforms and carrying assault rifles marched down the capital's main commercial street in a display of might meant to show Prime Minister Fuad Saniora's govern-

ment who really is in charge.

The army largely stood aside as Shiite fighters scattered their opponents in street battles across the capital's Muslim sector. Lebanon's generals have stayed out of the conflict in fear that intervening could splinter the army along sectarian lines, as happened in the devastating 1975-90 civil war that killed 150,000 people and left parts of Beirut a moonscape.

Election in Serbia may cripple hunt for Mladic

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP)—For 13 years, he has eluded capture for atrocities a U.N. judge described as "scenes from hell ... written on the darkest pages of human history."

Gen. Ratko Mladic—indicted for genocide in the 1995 slaughter of up to 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Bosnia—remains one of the world's most-wanted fugitives. But Serbia's lukewarm pledge to capture him will give way to open defiance if ultranationalists win Sunday's parliamentary elections.

Western officials have all but given up hope that the 65-year-old Bosnian Serb military leader—believed to be hiding somewhere in Serbia—will ever face justice.

Their pessimism reflects a growing sense of resignation that no matter who is in charge in Belgrade, U.S. and European policy toward Serbia has failed, despite years of haranguing and a \$5 million State Department bounty on Mladic's head.

Attack from Gaza kills 1, Israeli retaliation kills 5

KFAR AZA, Israel (AP)—Gaza attackers sent mortar shells crashing into a border community late Friday, killing an Israeli in his garden and wounding three others, officials said. Israel retaliated with missile strikes that left five Hamas militants dead.

The surge in violence added pressure on Egyptian-led attempts to halt clashes between Gaza militants and the Israeli military.

Gaza's ruling Hamas movement claimed responsibility for the deadly mortar fire on Kfar Aza, a communal farm in southern Israel.

Hours later, Israeli aircraft fired missiles that slammed into

two Hamas police stations in southern Gaza, killing five militants, Hamas and Gaza health officials said. The Israeli military confirmed the airstrike and said it was responding to attacks on Israel, including the deadly mortar fire on Kfar Aza.

Palestinian militants frequently fire crude rockets and mortar shells into southern Israel from Gaza, killing 14 people since late 2001.

"Hamas is clearly in control of the Gaza Strip and responsible for all hostile fire into Israel. We hold it accountable for today's attack and the murder of our civilian," said David Baker, an Israeli government spokesman.

WORLD BRIEFS

Rocket hits BBC bureau in Baghdad

BAGHDAD (AP)—Shiite militants launched rockets toward the fortified Green Zone on Friday, taking advantage of a sandstorm that gave cover from attacks by U.S. aircraft. Some rockets fell short, including one that damaged the British Broadcasting Corp. bureau. At least seven other rocket explosions were heard. But U.S. authorities did not confirm any strikes inside the Green Zone, which includes the U.S. Embassy and much of the Iraqi government. The U.S. military, meanwhile, said Iraqi authorities mistakenly announced Thursday that the leader of al-Qaida in Iraq, Abu Ayyub al-Masri, had been captured in the northern city of

Mosul. American officials said a man who was arrested had a name similar to al-Masri's. There have been false alarms in the past about al-Masri. At least twice—in 2006 and last May—reports circulated that he was dead. Responding to the latest report, Maj. Peggy Kageleiry, a U.S. military spokeswoman in northern Iraq, said: "Neither coalition forces nor Iraqi security forces detained or killed Abu Ayyub al-Masri. This guy had a similar name."

Train quarantined in Ontario with mystery illness

TORONTO (AP)—Authorities quarantined a train in Ontario Friday after a woman died and several others reported being ill. But a doctor later ruled

out a serious infectious disease and said the train would likely soon resume its journey. Dr. David Williams, Ontario's chief medical officer, said that an elderly woman who died on the train did not have an infectious disease and the illnesses were unrelated. A passenger who was airlifted to a hospital and five others who reported being sick had unrelated minor illnesses, Williams said. He called it a confluence of three different events. One person was hospitalized in stable condition, said Laurel Ostfield, a spokeswoman for Ontario's minister of health. "The origin of the illness that caused the passenger death is unknown at this time," Williams said. "Lab tests have to date have eliminated a number of serious infectious illnesses."

Focus

Overlooked in the global food crisis: A problem with dirt

WASHINGTON (AP)—Science has provided the souped-up seeds to feed the world, through biotechnology and old-fashioned crossbreeding. Now the problem is the dirt they're planted in.

As seeds get better, much of the world's soil is getting worse and people are going hungry. Scientists say if they can get the world out of the economically triggered global food crisis, better dirt will be at the root of the solution.

Soils around the world are deteriorating with about one-fifth of the world's cropland considered degraded in some manner. The poor quality has cut production by about one-sixth, according to a World Resources Institute study. Some scientists consider it a slow-motion disaster.

In sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 1 million square miles of cropland have shown a "consistent significant decline," according to a March 2008 report by a worldwide consortium of agricultural institutions.

The cause of the current global food crisis is mostly based on market forces, speculation and hoarding, experts say. But beyond the economics lie droughts and floods, plant diseases and pests, and all too often, poor soil.

A generation ago, through better types of plants, Earth's food production exploded in what was then called the "green revolution." Some people thought the problem of feeding the world was solved and moved on. However, developing these new "magic seeds" was the easy part. The crucial element, fertile soil, was missing.

"The first thing to do is to have good soil," said Hans Herren, winner of the World Food Prize. "Even the best seeds can't do anything in sand and gravel."

Herren is co-chairman of the International Assessment of Agricultural Knowledge, Science and Technology for Development, a collection of scientists sponsored by the United Nations and World Bank. It produced a 2,500-page report last month which, among other recommendations, emphasized a need to improve the world's soil.

Genetic improvements in corn make it possible to grow up to 9,000 pounds of corn per acre in Africa. But millions of poor African farmers only get about 500 pounds an acre "because over the years, their soils have become very infertile and they can't afford to purchase fertilizers," said Roger Leakey, a co-author of the international report and professor at James Cooke University in Australia.

Soil and water issues "have been taken for granted," said Ohio State University soil scientist Rattan Lal. "It is a problem that is not going to be solved. It's going to



AP
Farm laborers plant rice seedlings at the experimental plots of the International Rice Research Institute, IRRI, at Los Banos, Laguna province 70 kilometers (43 miles) south of Manila, Philippines Saturday May 3, 2008.

get worse before it gets better."

In Africa, farmers are forced to use practices that rob nutrients from the soil, not put it back, said Herren, who heads an Arlington, Va., nonprofit. Fertilizer is a quick, short-term fix, but even that isn't being done, he said.

The current crisis could have been avoided "if we, the world, had promoted fertilizer in Africa and we have known for ages it works," said Pedro Sanchez, Columbia University tropical agricultural director.

In that way, the problem with soil is a prime example of a larger failing of agriculture science,

said Sanchez, who has won both the World Food Prize and a MacArthur genius grant. Scientists have the knowledge to feed the world right now, but that is not happening, Sanchez said. "It's very frustrating, especially when you see children dying."

The fruits of biotechnology and the staples of modern agricultural scientific techniques include irrigation, crop rotation, reduced tilling, use of fertilizer and improved seeds. It's a way of farming differently instead of just using better seeds that requires extra money up-front that many African farmers don't

have, scientists said.

Fixing soil just isn't "sexy" enough to interest governments or charities, said Robert Zeigler, director general of the International Rice Research Institute in Manila, Philippines.

Zeigler's center last week planted its 133rd crop of rice in the same land since 1963, trying to pinpoint the right combination of nitrogen and fertilizer. Better seeds worked wonders. But finding money for soil health is difficult and because of that, less work is accomplished, he said.

But there are success stories, Sanchez said, pointing to the small African country of Malawi. Three years ago, the country's new president invested 8 percent of Malawi's national budget in a

subsidy program to get fertilizer and better seeds to small farmers. Each farmer got two bags of fertilizer and 4 1/2 pounds of seeds at less than half the cost.

Before the program started, one-third of Malawi was on food aid and the country wasn't growing enough food for itself, Sanchez said. It was producing 1.2 million tons of maize in 2005. In 2006, Malawi had more than doubled its production. By 2007 and 2008, the crop was up to 3.4 and 3.3 million tons. Now Malawi is exporting corn.

"In two years, the country has changed from a food aid recipient to a food aid donor and is self-sufficient," Sanchez said. "If Malawi can do it, richer countries like Nigeria, Kenya can do it."



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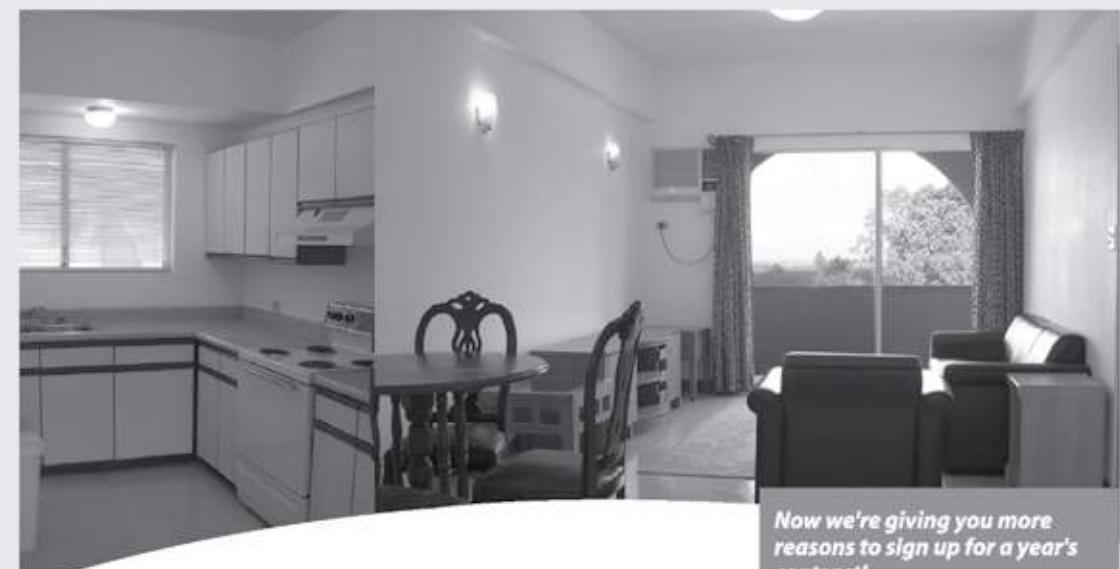
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China farms the world to feed a ravenous economy

By DENIS D. GRAY
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

CHALEUNSOUK, Laos (AP)

—The rice fields that blanketed this remote mountain village for generations are gone. In their place rise neat rows of young rubber trees - their sap destined for China.

All 60 families in this dirt-poor, mud-caked village of gaunt men and hunched women are now growing rubber, like thousands of others across the rugged mountains of northern Laos. They hope in coming years to reap huge profits from the tremendous demand for rubber just across the frontier in China.

As Beijing scrambles to feed its galloping economy, it has already scoured the world for mining and logging concessions. Now it is turning to crops to feed its people and industries. Chinese enterprises are snapping up vast tracts of land abroad and forging contract farming deals.

This quest raises both hope and criticism.

Laos' communist regime touts rubber as a miracle crop that will help lift the country from the ranks of the world's poorest nations. China is expected to consume a third of the world's rubber by 2020, become its largest car market and put 200 million vehicles on the road.

But some Laotian farmers are losing their ancestral lands or being forced to become wage workers on what were once their fields. Chinese companies are accused of getting rubber concessions from officials and not compensating farmers. They are also accused of violat-

ing laws, human rights and the environment, under conditions described by experts as "anarchic."

"The Chinese companies in the north are a bunch of thugs," says Charles Alton, a consultant in agronomy for international agencies in Laos. However, Alton says, the "unpoliced, unregulated situation" in northern Laos is ripe for exploitation.

The Chinese deny or don't comment on such allegations.

"I haven't heard of the bad behavior of Chinese companies abroad, but Chinese companies which intend to expand abroad must know it is important to have a good relationship with the local people," says Ju Hongzhen, president of the China Rubber Industry Association.

China's State Forestry Administration last year issued guidelines for Chinese firms running overseas plantations. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization is also scrambling to put out guidelines for a fast-moving global scenario.

From Southeast Asia to Africa, the Chinese are farming oil palm, eucalyptus, teak, corn, cassava, sugar cane, rubber and other crops. As in Laos, the industrial-size farms are variously viewed as an ecological nightmare or a big step toward slashing poverty.

In Congo, a Chinese telecommunications giant, ZTE International, has bought more than 7 million acres of forest to plant oil palms. In Zimbabwe, state-owned China International Water and Electric Corp. reportedly received rights from the government to farm 250,000 acres of corn in the south.



Laotian rubber workers play their guitars as they walk through a plantation near Luang Nam Tha, Laos along the China border, Friday, Feb. 22, 2008.

Indonesia is moving to develop biofuel plantations with The China National Overseas Oil Corporation. The London-based Environmental Investigation Agency, an advocacy group, believes other deals are in the works, often through

proxy companies because of long-running anti-Chinese sentiment in the country. The group says the project would destroy natural forest.

In Myanmar, rubber concessions have gone to at least two Chinese companies, Ho Nan Ching and Yunnan Hongyu. Refugees fleeing Myanmar's military regime say troops are forcibly evicting farmers to make way for rubber plantations, including some run by Chinese enterprises.

A Chinese-Cambodian joint venture, Pheapimex-Wuzishan, converted land of the Phong tribal people into a tree plantation 20 times larger than allowed by law in Cambodia, according to the environmental group Global Witness. The group says the concession in Mondulkiri province encroached on grazing grounds, destroyed sacred sites and used toxic herbicides.

Another Chinese enterprise in Kratie province circumvented the size restriction by registering as three separate companies, Global Witness says.

In Beijing, the Commerce Ministry declined to answer written questions about China's global reach in agriculture or operations of Chinese enterprises abroad except in Laos, where it said companies had a "very strong awareness for environmental protection." Local residents welcome the new developments because incomes have increased by as much as five times, a ministry statement said.

However, the central government in Laos last May ordered a moratorium on concessions over 100 hectares (247 acres), in part because it had become clear many were covers for logging.

Entire hills in the north have been scalped of green cover, and rubber trees penetrate into the tangled natural forests. Also being cleared are secondary forests, sources of medicinal herbs and edible plants that tribal people have depended on for

taken advantage of. The system is corrupt and there are loopholes and sometimes it works in their favor and sometimes against them," says Weiyi Shi, an American economist who recently completed a study on the rubber industry.

The study found that when the China-Lao Rui Feng Rubber Company moved in, the frontier village of Changee lost most of its rice fields and grazing land and its burial grounds were desecrated. The pleas of villagers got no result and some protesters were reportedly held at gunpoint, with the Chinese using coercion through local authorities.

A company executive, Zheng Fengqi, contacted in China, denied there were any protests on the concession granted by the military.

"The local people also liked the project because they could earn more money and lead a life of better quality," he says.

Many independent farmers do indeed embrace the Chinese with enthusiasm, hoping to replicate an earlier rubber bonanza in China's neighboring Yunnan province. Some have personal contacts, even relatives, living in China and set up informal business arrangements with them.

Some villagers even torch their surrounding forests, hoping the Chinese will come in and offer them rubber trees.

"They see what is in China, where people have gone from wooden houses to concrete, walking or bikes to motorbikes and cars, buffaloes to hand tractors and kerosene to electricity," says Michael Dwyer, a natural resources researcher from the University of California, Berkeley. "They want the same."

Farmers can hope to take home up to \$1,200 from an acre of rubber - roughly seven times more than from growing rice. But it will be another six to



A single worker's hut sits among recently planted rubber trees on a hillside in Luang Nam Tha, Laos near the China border, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2008.

AP

Laotian rubber tree worker Maiup Salao, pauses as he tends his farm, Thursday, Feb. 21, 2008, near Muang Singh, Laos, along the China border.



Laotian workers look on at a rubber tree plantation near Luang Nam Tha, Laos along the China border, Friday, Feb. 22, 2008.

generations.

The government edict against concessions appears to have been ignored in the north, where local officials often make the rules in an environment of corruption, ill-defined land laws, vague agreements and conflicting agencies.

"The Chinese companies do everything in their power to take advantage but they are also

seven years before latex begins to ooze from most trees in the north.

"If the price is high we will prosper," says Chan Phoung, one of the villagers at Chaleunsouk, inhabited by the Khmu ethnic minority. "If it's low we don't know what we will do."

A friend adds: "It's like raising a pig for profit - it may die before you can sell it at the market."

Life & Style

'Idol' finalists bask in adoration of home fans

Everywhere they go, "American Idol" contestants attract a crowd of admirers, well-wishers, gushy handmade signs and screams fit for a vintage Beatle. But when it comes to feting finalists, home is where the "I (heart) you" is.

In what's become an annual "Idol" rite of passage, the remaining three contestants—David Archuleta, Syesha Mercado and David Cook—headed to their respective hometowns Friday for a dose of family and the inevitably intense local rah-rah routine, showing just how stirred up communities get when one of their own shines on TV's biggest stage.

Children are pulled from school. Elected officials make grand declarations. Pro sports teams clear the national-anthem calendar. Motorcades roll.

In Murray, Utah, Archuleta was greeted by the same sound that reaches the "Idol" stage every time he steps on it: screaming girls. There was no shortage of caterwauling Friday, from the cheerleaders who greeted him outside the KSTU-TV studios, to the students at Murray High School (where Archuleta is a junior) and intermixed among the thousands of people gathered for a glimpse at The Gateway, a Salt Lake City mall.

At the Murray High football stadium, many people wore T-shirts that read, "I Voted For David Archuleta."

"This is the biggest thing ever for Murray," said 12-year-old Marnie Hartbrecht. She and two friends explained how they get together as often as possible to watch the show and vote for the 17-year-old, lining up about seven cell phones for maximum effect.

They held a sign that said: "I (heart) you David." Another group held a sign above their heads that read: "Future wife (s)"—with arrows pointing to each.



American Idol finalist David Archuleta, of Murray, Utah, is surrounded at The Gateway shopping mall in Salt Lake City, Utah, Friday May 9, 2008.

Earlier in the day, Archuleta appeared for an interview at the Salt Lake City Fox affiliate, KSTU-TV. "Wow!" the pint-sized crooner exclaimed as he took stock of the cheering squad outside his stretch limousine.

In Bradenton, Fla., about halfway between St. Petersburg and Sarasota, hundreds of fans—including schoolchildren who were bussed in by the dozen—awaited the arrival of Mercado. Manatee County Commissioner Gwen Brown whipped the crowd into a frenzy by setting a few things straight: Most importantly, she said, Mercado belongs to Manatee County—not Sarasota, as her hometown is listed on the show's Web site.

"She is our girl," Brown said, asserting that Mercado went to high school at Sarasota's Booker High, but lived in Manatee County. "We just loaned her to Sarasota for a few hours a day."

Running about half an hour late, the 21-year-old's entourage finally showed up—a sport

utility vehicle stretch limo and Manatee County sheriff's cars carrying friends and family.

In Kansas City, Mo., the crowds withstood wind and drizzle for a glimpse of the shaggy-haired and raggedy-voiced rocker Cook, a native of the suburb of Blue Springs. His hometown tour—during a day which Missouri and Kansas City officials declared "David Cook Day"—started bright and early with TV appearances on the local Fox affiliate, followed by his late-morning appearance at the Power & Light District.

"What are you guys doing here?" Cook said, teasing the screaming crowd. "Guys, thank you, seriously. ... I don't know what else to say. This is the coolest day of my life."

Fans sang along loudly as Cook performed Bon Jovi's "Livin' on a Prayer" and a rocked-out version of Mariah Carey's "Always Be My Baby," taking over the lyrics at times while Cook strummed his guitar

and grinned.

"So do you guys watch the show, seriously?" Cook asked between tunes. "Man, you guys are fantastic."

Ten-year-old Jake Lamb said he joined the tens of millions who watch the show solely because of the local connection. "We just started watching the show since he was on it," Lamb said.

Safe to say he probably also wasn't the only kid missing school on Friday on account of "Idol." His mother, not seeing any harm in a missed day of classes for the occasion, was behind the plan.

"This is once in a lifetime," said Gusti Lamb. "We want to support (Cook) and watch him go all the way."

A bigger concert in Blue Springs, scheduled for later in the day, was sold out.

"How often does 'American Idol' come to your town and you get to see it up close and personal?" said Rachael Hufford,

Archuleta's dad loses 'American Idol' backstage pass

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Backstage meddling has caught up "American Idol" favorite David Archuleta's dad, who's been banned from rehearsals, a person working for the TV talent contest said Friday.

Jeff Archuleta was told this week by producers that he can no longer join 17-year-old son as David as he prepares for the show, the person familiar with the matter told The Associated Press. The person wasn't authorized to comment publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

The show's action was first reported Friday by the online Web site TMZ.

David Archuleta of Murray, Utah, is one of three contestants left as the top-rated Fox show heads toward the Jan. 20-21 finale. The fresh-faced teenager with the big voice has consistently been deemed a front-runner by the judges and been a consistent fan favorite.

Jeff Archuleta's intense backstage involvement had become a source of concern for the series, the person connected with "American Idol" said—but it was a lyric change on Tuesday's show that pushed producers to act.

Despite a warning, Jeff Archuleta insisted on altering "Stand by Me," one of two songs his son sang on the show Tuesday. By adding a verse from Sean Kingston's "Beautiful Girls," the father incurred additional costs for "American Idol," the person said.

Fox declined comment. Attempts to reach Jeff Archuleta for comment were unsuccessful. A phone number listed under his name in Murray, Utah, was no longer in service, and Fox did not immediately respond to a request Friday evening for help in contacting the family.

Earlier Friday, David Archuleta was honored at a hometown celebration held at his high school in Murray, during which Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman declared "David Archuleta Day."

The singer and his family declined to be interviewed at the event, but David Archuleta did speak with the Salt Lake City Fox affiliate, KSTU-TV. "Wow," he exclaimed as he viewed the cheerleading squad outside his stretch limousine.

The other finalists left in competition for the "Idol" title and a record contract are David Cook and Syesha Mercado. Cook, a native of suburban Blue Springs, Mo., had his own homecoming celebration Friday in Kansas City, while Mercado was feted Bradenton, Fla.

of Kansas City, Kan. "I wasn't missing it for nothing."

Her friend, Anna Bergen, of Leavenworth, Kan., called the whole experience "inspiring."

"You think that this is hard to reach," Bergen said. "But look at David Cook, he made it."

For all the adoration, the

"Idol" hopefuls were still going to have to sing for their supper—each was expected to tackle "The Star-Spangled Banner" later that night: Archuleta at the Jazz-Lakers NBA playoff game, Mercado at the Rays-Angels game and Cook at the Royals-Orioles.

Fans flocking to see 'Sex and the City' in the city

NEW YORK (AP)—Forget the Empire State Building. Some New York tourists are eager to see the city's other landmarks: Carrie's stoop, Charlotte's gallery and that restaurant where Samantha threw a martini in a boyfriend's face.

Fans of "Sex and the City" have long arrived here eager to see the \$500 shoes, the Cosmopolitan-drinking fashionistas and the glamorous serial daters for themselves. Now, with the movie follow-up to the show set to premiere later this month, a number of them are planning trips so that they can see "Sex and the City" ... in the city.

"Once we found out there was going to be a movie, we thought what a great weekend to do a girls' trip to New York City, the weekend of the premiere," said Amy Walker, a 31-year-old accountant from Minneapolis who says she has watched the entire series twice on DVD.

Along with three female friends, she's planning to relax at a spa mentioned on the show, take a "Sex and the City Hotspots" tour and see the movie on its opening weekend.

"The producers have said that New York City is the fifth lady of the show," says Lisa Blythe Perlman, a guide for the hotspots tour. "Eighty percent of the show was filmed on location."

Perlman and her colleagues bus about 1,000 tourists a week to

see Carrie's stoop, check out her favorite sex-toy shop, sample her signature cocktail and eat the same cupcakes that they first spotted on the show. The tour company says it has already seen advance purchases more than double for the May 30 opening weekend.

"'Sex and the City' has been one of the all-time great commercials for the city of New York," says George Fertitta, who heads NYC & Company, the city's tourism office. "There's all of the fabric and the texture and the vibrancy of New York. ... It shows everything: from a great shopping component to a nightlife component, to a restaurant component."

Fertitta, who peppers his conversations with journalists with mentions of the show, said he was surprised on a recent visit to China when he found himself flooded by questions from local female reporters about the series.

"They look at this as a window into New York City," he said.

With its glossy shoots at parks, restaurants, nightclubs and shops around the city, the series has been something of an international ambassador for New York, showing in more than 200 countries around the world, according to HBO. About one-third of "Sex and the City Hotspots" tour-goers are from outside the United States, says On Location Tours spokeswoman Cathy Epstein.

The city is looking to capitalize on that interest. NYC & Com-



Tourists watch actress Sarah Jessica Parker, who plays Carrie Bradshaw, on a monitor during the "Sex and the City" tour in New York, Tuesday, April 1, 2008.

pany is launching a Web site to help visitors plan a "Sex and the City"-themed visit, and is organizing sweepstakes for such trips in Australia, Canada, France, Germany, Britain and around the U.S. On Location Tours is offering an opening-night package that includes its hotspots tour, the movie, and a cocktail party.

Jury selection begins in R. Kelly child pornography case

CHICAGO (AP)—Jury selection began Friday in R. Kelly's long-delayed child pornography trial.

The 41-year-old R&B singer is accused of having sex with a girl as young as 13 on videotape. Kelly, who has pleaded not guilty, faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted.

Cook County Circuit Court Judge Vincent Gaughan read the 14-count indictment to some 150 potential jurors who packed the courtroom. Gaughan refused to allow reporters to view the proceedings. A court official said there weren't enough seats.

Earlier Friday, Gaughan denied a defense motion to again postpone the trial that already has been delayed for six years.

Defense attorney Marc Martin told the court the jury pool was "irrevocably poisoned" by an article in Friday's Chicago Sun-Times citing unnamed sources talking about a potential witness.

But prosecutors contended it was premature to say the article affected potential jurors and that if any were tainted, they could be weeded out during the selection process.

Publicity surrounding the case has heated up and some media has speculated about who might testify.

Kelly didn't acknowledge the crowd Friday morning as he walked into the courthouse with several other people and a



AP
Singer R. Kelly leaves after the first day of jury selection in his child pornography trial at the Cook County Criminal Courthouse in Chicago, Friday, May 9, 2008.

videographer. Raucous onlookers shouted "I love you" and "R. Kelly's a pedophile."

Prosecutors will have to surmount several hurdles if they hope to prevail.

Chief among them is that the alleged victim, now 23, says it wasn't her. And Kelly's lawyers—including prominent Chicago attorney Ed Genson—haven't admitted it's Kelly in the video.

The trial's centerpiece is the videotape, which Gaughan ruled may be shown in open court.

Prosecutors claim the videotape was made sometime between Jan. 1, 1998, and Nov. 1, 2000, and that the girl was born in September 1984. Kelly was indicted on pornography charges June 5, 2002, after the tape surfaced.

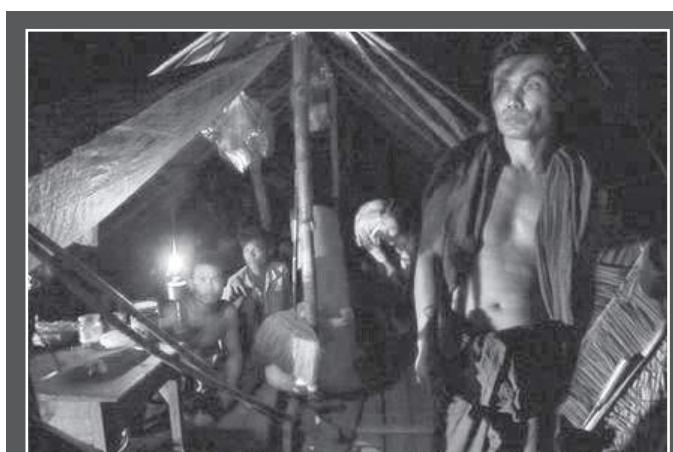
It is unclear whether prosecutors have asked—or would be allowed—to tell jurors about accusations that Kelly allegedly had sexual relations with other minors, because some of the trial proceedings have been kept secret by the judge.

Media outlets, including The Associated Press, have filed a motion seeking to get court records and hearing transcripts unsealed. Gaughan has said he would rule on that motion May 16.

Gaughan, who has imposed a gag order, also said he would later rule on a defense motion to consider appointing a special prosecutor to investigate apparent leaks to the Sun-Times.

Once the trial gets under way, it is expected to last at least several weeks.

Although he won a Grammy in 1997 for the gospel-like song "I Believe I Can Fly," Kelly's biggest hits are sexually charged songs like "Bump N' Grind," "Ignition" and his current single, "Hair Braider." He is due to release a new album in July.



AP
Cyclone survivors from Painnakan village camp sit together as they live in a tent on the roadside, after their houses were destroyed by the recent cyclone in Laputta, in Delta region, Myanmar, Friday, May 9, 2008.

Narrow escapes for CNN reporter in Myanmar

NEW YORK (AP)—A CNN reporter who left Myanmar Friday was chased by authorities as he reported on the aftermath of Cyclone Nargis but escaped primarily because of the incompetence of the people after him.

Dan Rivers hid under a blanket at one police checkpoint and casually covered up his name on a passport to avoid detection another time. He may ultimately have gotten out of the country due to a stewardess' impatience.

"I was amazed at the lengths they apparently went just to catch me," Rivers told The Associated Press by telephone from Thailand on Saturday.

Rivers' story illustrates the preoccupation of Myanmar's military government with things other than helping the country recover from a storm that killed thousands and left many survivors homeless. Aid groups have reported difficulties in getting badly needed supplies and relief workers into the secretive country.

Rivers sneaked into the country on Monday—he wouldn't say how—and for a day reported the story without saying his name or showing his face onscreen.

CNN, owned by Time Warner Inc., and Rivers then quickly agreed to drop the mask.

"We decided it would have much more impact if I could communicate more directly, if I could look down the barrel of a camera and tell people precisely how bad it was," he said. "I think that type of personal reporting is much more effective than a voiceover on a picture."

But it made him a marked man. A local contact told Rivers' crew the government was looking for him by contacting all hotels where foreigners stayed.

During reporting on Thursday, an immigration official stopped Rivers' group. He took the passports of two crew

members and compared them to a picture of Rivers taken from a CNN screen. During the two hours before they were waved on, Rivers said he went to a restaurant and walked the streets, "trying not to look like a white guy with long hair, which was difficult."

The authorities didn't discover the men were from CNN. Knowing his picture was being circulated, Rivers hid under a blanket in the van the next time police checked.

He later resumed reporting away from their van until an official told them to return to their van, where police would be waiting. It was a tough walk.

"There were a lot of things going through our minds then about what we would find at the end of that journey," he said. "At one point I was thinking, 'what if they just shot us and threw us into the river and said it was an accident?'

There were only two policemen waiting. They asked to see Rivers' passport and he casually covered up his first and last names with his thumbs. They radioed Rivers' two middle names back to their bosses.

They were passed on to another government official, who let them go after being convinced they were part of a relief group. Strategic offerings of cigarettes, water and a candy bar helped.

The crew rushed back to the capital city of Yangon.

"I kind of felt that I'd used my nine lives up and it was time to get out of the country," Rivers said. He was afraid for the safety of his Burmese contacts if he were found out and, frankly, didn't want officials spending time searching for him when they had more important things to do.

While on a plane to get out of the country, Rivers was called back to the gate to be searched. He'd been found out. He was thoroughly searched, but fortunately had no pictures with him.

Hulk Hogan's son sentenced to 8 months for crash

CLEARWATER, Fla. (AP)—The 17-year-old son of wrestling superstar Hulk Hogan was sentenced to eight months in jail Friday after he pleaded no contest to causing a crash that seriously injured his best friend.

Nick Bollea was immediately led out of court to begin his sentence. He cast a quick backward glance at his family, then his tie and belt were removed before he was taken to the jail next door.

The judge also ordered Bollea to serve five years of probation and surrender his driving privileges for three years.

Hogan, whose real name is Terry Bollea, wore a black bandanna and testified on his son's behalf, as did his estranged wife Linda and daughter Brooke.

The family of John Graziano, who was critically hurt in the August crash, asked the judge to impose a sentence of up to a year in jail, well short of the five years Nick Bollea could have received.

The Bolleas, who star in the VH1 reality show "Hogan Knows Best," left the courtroom glumly after the verdict and did not comment.

Nick Bollea was arrested in November and charged with felony reckless driving that caused a serious bodily injury. Authorities say he was street racing his father's 1998 Toyota Supra when he struck a curb, spun in traffic and slammed into a palm tree.



AP
Flanked by his attorneys Morris Sandy Weinberg, left, and Kevin Hayslett, Nick Bollea takes the oath to tell the truth in front of Pinellas County Judge Phillip Federico, before being sentenced to eight months in county jail Friday, May 9, 2008, in Clearwater, Fla.

The impact critically injured Graziano, who now needs lifetime medical care. A former Marine who served in Iraq, Graziano was not wearing a seat belt and suffered a broken skull and other severe injuries.

Bollea, who was not seriously hurt, had alcohol in his system at the time of the crash. Authorities cited him for being a driver under 21 operating a vehicle with a blood-alcohol level of .02 percent or higher and having illegal window tinting. He will attend DUI classes and can't drink as terms of his probation.

Assistant State Attorney Scott Rosenwasser said a reconstruction determined Bollea was driv-

ing 69 miles per hour on a busy street. The accident came roughly two weeks after Bollea had been cited for driving 82 miles per hour in a construction zone and was one of numerous speeding tickets and warnings on the teen's driving record, Rosenwasser said.

Graziano's family has filed a civil suit against Terry and Linda Bollea, alleging they are liable for their son's actions. The suit is a key reason why Nick Bollea opted not to admit guilt during Friday's hearing.

Graziano's family said through an attorney they were satisfied with the verdict, but wished the judge would have found Bollea guilty.

"Speeding to Nick was a badge of honor," Graziano's mother, Debbie, said during the hearing. "I'm not seeking revenge, only justice."

Graziano, 23, befriended Bollea because of their mutual love of cars, according to testimony Friday. In court, Bollea apologized to the Grazianos, turning his back to the judge and addressing the family directly.

Bollea's family, including his father, described Graziano as a fellow family member who celebrated birthdays, his deployment overseas and other important events at their house. "Now we're dealing with a void that just can't be filled," Linda Bollea said.

Walters: Jones going through 'difficult time'

WASHINGTON (AP)—Barbara Walters says she refuses to engage in a debate with Star Jones, who accused her of revealing a past affair with a senator just to sell books. Walters said despite the public rift, she prefers to hold onto the good times the former co-hosts shared on "The View."

"Star is going through a very difficult time right now, and I'm going to have very happy memories of how wonderful she was on the program," Walters told AP Radio on Friday. "I don't want to add to her difficulties."

Jones is going through a divorce from banker Al Reynolds, whom she married in 2004.

Jones lashed out at Walters after the veteran journalist wrote in her autobiography "Audition" that the women of "The View" were forced to cover up Jones' gastric bypass surgery as she swiftly lost weight ahead of her wedding. Jones maintained at the time that she was eating less and doing Pilates.

"We lied for Star," Walters told AP Radio. "She was our

colleague. She didn't want to discuss it, we didn't force her to. Was that a mistake? I don't know.... It was Star's decision."

Earlier this week, Jones criticized her former boss for writing about her, and for including revelations of an affair with former U.S. Senator Edward Brooke in the 1970s.

"It is a sad day when an icon like Barbara Walters, in the sunset of her life, is reduced to publicly branding herself as an adulterer, humiliating an innocent family with accounts of her illicit affair and speaking negatively against me all for the sake of selling a book. It speaks to her true character," Jones told Us Weekly magazine.

Walters said her intention was to give the book historical perspective.

"I put it in to show in great part how race relations have changed," Walters said. "This was 30 years ago, it was an African-American prominent man. And it would've destroyed his career, and mine. Today it would have almost no impact."



In a file photo made April 9, 2008 television personality Barbara Walters is seen during a panel discussion at The Paley Center for Media in New York.

Woman suspects fiance is stepping out at dance club

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

DEAR ABBY: I am a 38-year-old woman. My fiance of five years, "Troy," and I live together and are the parents of a 5-month-old baby girl.

We have been going out recently to dance at our favorite club, but every time we go, Troy disappears and leaves me with his best friend—sometimes up to five hours at a time.

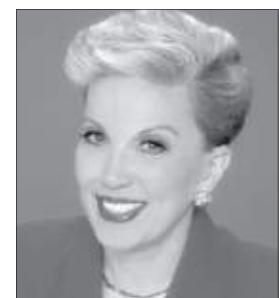
The club has several stories, with many secluded nooks, so Troy is hard to find. When I finally locate him, he's sweaty and has a weird look on his face. When I ask where he was and why he disappeared, I get no answers.

His friend covers for him. My fiance and I have never had a night out without this guy coming with us, and I'm tired of Troy's disappearing act. Something is going on.

He calls me paranoid, but I think if you leave your fiancee every time you go out, something is not right.

Am I being paranoid? Or does he have someone stashed in the club waiting for him? By the way, I make most of the money and pay for the nights out.

SUSPICIOUS IN NEW JERSEY



Dear Abby

DEAR SUSPICIOUS: Obviously something is up—another woman, or possibly your fiance is using drugs—and his best friend is there to make sure you don't find out. I hope you don't actually plan to marry this man, because he does not appear to be financially or emotionally ready for marriage. In fact, it appears he's happy as things are—with you as his meal ticket.

However, to settle your curiosity, the next time you plan to go dancing, ask a girlfriend to come to the club separately and spend the evening tracking Troy. That should give you a clear picture of what has been going on behind the scenes.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I have the most annoying laugh. It goes from a cackle to a loud screech. I have lost friends over this because people don't enjoy being seen in public with me. Is there anything I can do to solve this problem?

KRISTEN IN WAYNE, N.J.

DEAR KRISTEN: It is possible to modulate one's laughter, as it is one's speaking voice. It takes practice and discipline, but it can be done.

However, there is much to be said for a genuine, spontaneous, hearty laugh. And those who would end a friendship because they don't want to be seen in public with you are shallow. So perhaps you should reconsider whether you want to be seen with THEM.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: I was recently invited to a friend's house for the weekend. As I prepared to retire for the night, I realized that the sheets were not clean.

I looked for another set of sheets to change the bed, but couldn't find any. It was late, my hostess had gone to bed and—needless to say—I didn't have a great night's sleep. I didn't want to embarrass her, but I didn't want to sleep on a soiled bed. How would you have handled this?

SLEEPLESS IN COLORADO

DEAR SLEEPLESS: I would have slept on the bedsheet or outside the covers, and in the morning I would have asked my hostess for fresh sheets "because the last guest forgot to change the linen."

■ ■ ■

CONFIDENTIAL TO PAULINE PHILLIPS, MY DARLING MOTHER: A Happy Mother's Day from your first-born. You are in my heart, my thoughts and my prayers today and every day.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write *Dear Abby* at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To order "How to Write Letters for All Occasions," send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$6 (U.S. funds) to: *Dear Abby*—Letter Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Foxy Brown pleads guilty to menacing neighbor



In this Sept. 22, 2005 file photo, rapper Foxy Brown exits Manhattan criminal court in New York.

Mary J. Blige starts foundation to help women with careers

YONKERS, N.Y. (AP)—The queen of hip-hop soul is establishing a foundation to help women develop careers and gain self-confidence.

Mary J. Blige and Steve Stoute, who founded a youth-oriented brand consulting firm, say they're setting up the Foundation for the Advancement of Women Now.

The foundation will concentrate first on the Yonkers, New York, area where the 37-year-old Blige grew up. The charity will fund scholarships, grants and programs that help women gain confidence and skills to succeed in their careers.

Blige and Stoute say they expect to expand to the New York metropolitan area and then the nation.



Mary J. Blige, who grew up in Yonkers, N.Y., listens to a question as she announced the Mary J. Blige and Steve Stoute Foundation for the Advancement of Women Now, at Roosevelt High School in Yonkers, N.Y. Friday, May 9, 2008.

AP

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Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER



Boozer, Jazz beat Lakers; cut series lead to 2-1



SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Carlos Boozer broke out of his slump with 27 points and tied his career playoff-high with 20 rebounds, leading the Utah Jazz to a 104-99 victory over Los Angeles on Friday night, cutting the Lakers' lead in the series to 2-1.

It was the Lakers' first loss this postseason.

Game 4 of the Western Conference semifinal is Sunday at Utah.

The win made the home teams 11-0 in the four conference semifinal series.

Deron Williams had 18 points and 12 assists for Utah, which atoned for two miserable performances in Los Angeles by taking the lead early in the second quarter and hanging on to it the rest of the way.

Kobe Bryant scored 34 points for the Lakers, who got within three points with 3:22 to play but never caught the Jazz.

Utah improved to 4-1 in the playoffs at home, where the Jazz had the league's best mark in the regular season (37-4).

Utah's offense was stagnant in the first two games, but on Friday the Jazz started hitting from the outside and moving the ball around enough to clear the inside for the layups their offense is designed to create.

Utah went 39-for-78 from the field (50 percent) and overcame Los Angeles' advantage from the foul line. The Jazz took nine fewer free throws than the Lakers, but went 20-for-28 from the line and held off the late push by Bryant and the Lakers.

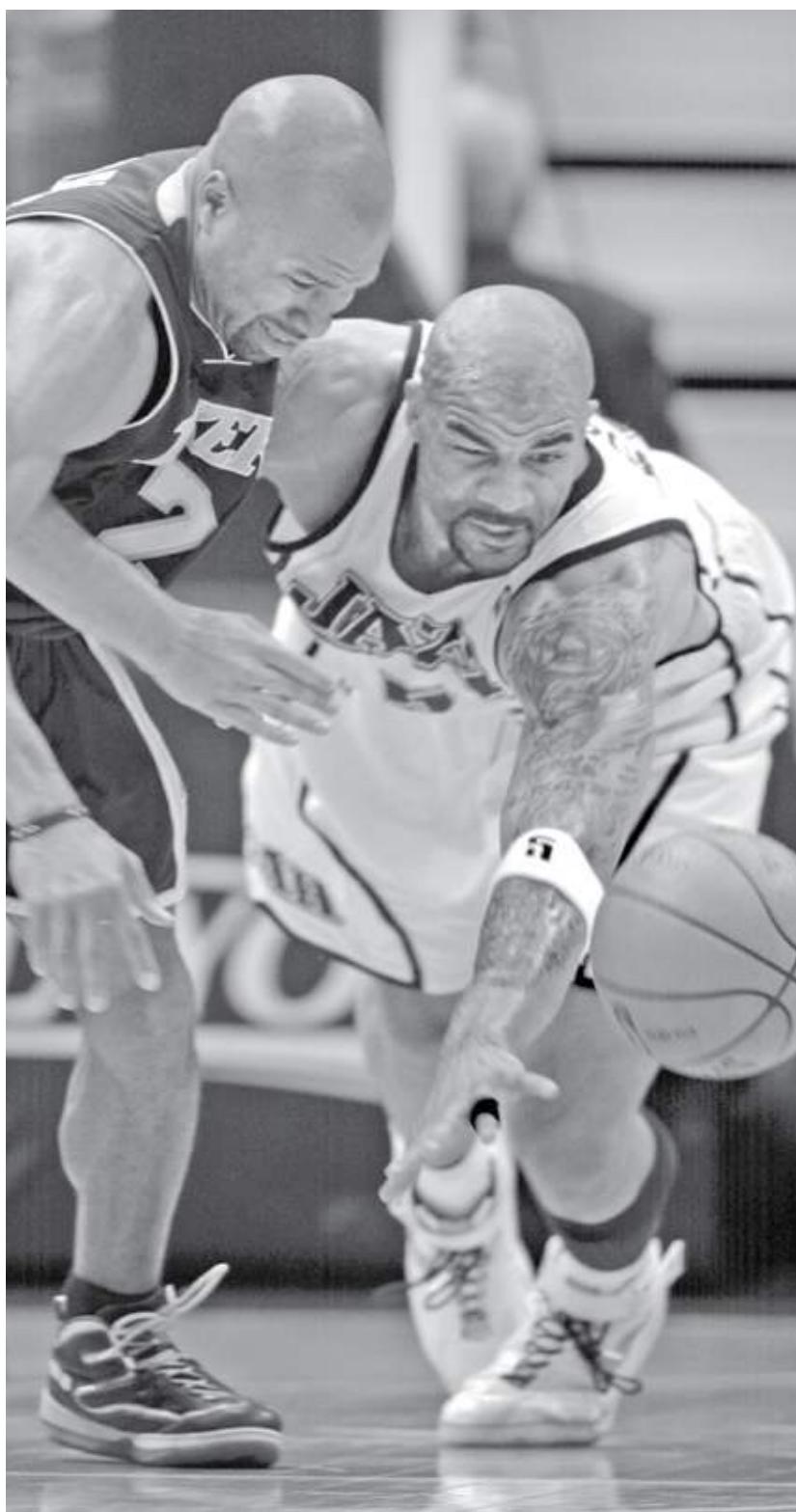
Los Angeles went on a 6-0 run to get within 95-92, then Boozer went to work. He hit a hook shot over Luke Walton in the lane to put Utah up 97-92, then Bryant lost the ball while falling and didn't get the foul call he wanted. The Jazz used 23 of the 24 seconds they had on the shot clock and Boozer made a shot over Lamar Odom.

After Bryant missed a 3-point attempt, the Jazz got the rebound and went to Boozer again for a 101-92 lead with 1:57 left.

Walton hit a 3-pointer with 1:08 left to get Los Angeles within 103-97, then Bryant made two from the line to get the Lakers within four.

The Jazz missed again at the other end, but the Lakers bobbed the ball, too, and Williams crashed to the floor for a loose ball and forced a jump ball. The guard didn't stand a chance against Lakers center Pau Gasol, but it ate up time and the Lakers turned it over again.

Utah forced 18 turnovers and out-



AP

Utah Jazz forward Carlos Boozer, right, and Los Angeles Lakers guard Derek Fisher (2) scramble for the ball during the fourth quarter of Game 3 of the NBA basketball Western Conference semifinal series Friday, May 9, 2008, in Salt Lake City.

scored the Lakers 48-36 in the paint.

Derek Fisher scored 13 points for the Lakers, exactly one year after his dramatic third-quarter entrance for the Jazz in an overtime win over Golden State. Fisher had flown in from New York, where his daughter was receiving treatment for a cancerous eye tumor. He got a standing ovation in that game, but on Friday was booed with the rest of the Lakers.

Mehmet Okur scored 22 points for

the Jazz, making 4-of-7 3-pointers, while Andrei Kirilenko and Matt Harpring both added 12 points for Utah

Utah led 79-72 at the end of the third quarter and opened the fourth with a 7-2 run, prompting the Lakers to end Bryant's rest on the bench quickly. But shortly after returning, Bryant was quickly called for an offensive foul for an elbow to Harpring's chin that quickly turned the Utah fans' boos to jeers.

Arenas has averaged 22.8 points, 5.5 assists and 4.2 rebounds in his seven-season NBA career. Jamison averaged 21.4 points—his highest output since the 2002-03 season with Golden State—and a career-best 10.2 rebounds this season, his 10th in the league.

Wizards president Ernie Grunfeld, who is scheduled to meet with the media Thursday, has said he would like to have both players back.

Last week, before Washington was eliminated in the first round of the playoffs by Cleveland, Grunfeld was asked about Arenas' future and replied: "We plan on re-signing him."

Arenas won't sign with Wizards, if Jamison goes

WASHINGTON (AP)—Gilbert Arenas insists he won't return to the Washington Wizards if forward Antawn Jamison isn't re-signed by the team.

"If he doesn't come back, I'm not coming back," Arenas said Wednesday in a posting on his blog, a rambling entry of more than 2,800 words.

Arenas, a three-time All-Star who missed most of this season after two operations on his left knee, can opt out of his contract. He has said since before the season that he planned to do that so he could stay with Washington for more money.

Jamison, a team co-captain and

two-time All-Star, is set to become a free agent.

"I want to be back in Washington, but weird things happen in free agency," Arenas said on the blog. "If Antawn is not back, then there's no point in me coming back because he's part of my success, too."

Arenas and Jamison have been teammates the past four seasons in Washington, and they were together with the Golden State Warriors for two seasons.

"I know everybody is focusing on whether I'm coming back," Arenas' blog entry said, "but I'm focusing on what he's doing."

Done deal: Carlisle, Mavs have verbal agreement

DALLAS (AP)—Rick Carlisle will be the new coach of the Dallas Mavericks, a decision expected for nearly a week but slowed by contract negotiations.

The papers aren't signed yet, but team owner Mark Cuban confirmed in an email to The Associated Press on Friday night that a verbal deal is in place.

The contract "will be signed tomorrow (Saturday)," with a news conference Wednesday because Cuban will be out of town until then.

Reached late Friday, Carlisle said: "Whatever Mark told you is what's going on. I'm not going to make any comments about it right now."

Carlisle was the only candidate the Mavericks interviewed after firing coach Avery Johnson the morning after their second straight first-round playoff exit.

Cuban had never fired a coach or hired a coach from outside the organization. While he and Donnie Nelson, the team's president of basketball operations, considered other candidates, they settled on Carlisle pretty quickly. A few interviews later, they began working on the contract and things dragged on.

This is Carlisle's third time as head coach and his first stint in the Western Conference, where having Jason Kidd and Dirk Nowitzki doesn't guarantee making the playoffs. Carlisle went 281-211 over two seasons in Detroit, then four in Indiana. He made the playoffs his first five years, then lost his job with the Pacers after missing out in 2007. He spent this past year out of the NBA, but following it closely working for ESPN.

Although Dallas has won at least 50 games and been in the playoffs eight straight years, the club is getting older and has a maxed-out salary cap, meaning it will take some creative deals to shake up the roster.

Kidd was hoping for a coach who would encourage more of a free-flowing offense, while Nowitzki wanted someone who would still emphasize defense. Other players probably want-

NBA BRIEFS

Billups' status for Game 4 uncertain

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Chauncey Billups said Thursday he was still sore, a night after he was forced to leave the Pistons' loss to Orlando in Game 3 of the Eastern Conference semifinals because of a strained right hamstring. The All-Star guard said he isn't sure if he will be ready to play in Game 4 on Saturday in Orlando. The Magic's 111-86 victory Wednesday cut the Pistons' lead to 2-1. "Just going to take it one day at a time and see what happens," Billups said. "But it's feeling sore, kind of similar to last night." Billups was in the trainer's room all night, and expected to be there all day Thursday. He was injured when his feet got caught up with Magic guard Jameer Nelson on a drive to the basket four minutes into the game. "I felt a little something," Billups said. "I'm just hoping it was a strain, what I felt. But I felt something in there. I never really had a hamstring like this before."

Wallace doubtful for Game 3 because of allergies

INDEPENDENCE, Ohio (AP)—Cavaliers starting forward Ben Wallace is doubtful for Game 3 of Cleveland's playoff series against the Boston Celtics because of allergies and a left inner ear infection. Wallace underwent a series of tests at the Cleveland Clinic on Friday. The team said the defensive stopper could be upgraded but it was "best case, 50-50" that Wallace would play Saturday in Game 3. Cavs coach Mike Brown said if Wallace can't go, Anderson Varejao would likely start up front alongside LeBron James and Zydrunas Ilgauskas as Cleveland tries to climb back from an 0-2 deficit in the best-of-seven series. Wallace joined the Cavaliers in a trade from Chicago in February. He missed several regular-season games because of back spasms.

Milwaukee snaps losing streak with win over Cardinals



M I L -
W A U K E E
(A P) — A

bases-loaded single with two outs in the bottom of the ninth gave Milwaukee a 4-3 victory over the St. Louis Cardinals on Friday in the National League, snapping the Brewers' six-game losing streak in style.

After looking lethargic most of the game, the Brewers came alive after the Cardinals recorded two outs on the first two pitches of the ninth.

Astros 7, Dodgers 1

In Los Angeles, Brian Moehler pitched five scoreless innings to steer Houston past Los Angeles.

Lance Berkman went 3-for-4 with a home run for the Astros.

Phillies 7, Giants 4

In San Francisco, Jimmy Rollins led Philadelphia to victory over San Francisco in his long-awaited return.

The reigning NL MVP came

off the disabled list and hit a two-run homer, an RBI double and a single.

Cubs 3, Diamondbacks 1

In Chicago, the home side downed Arizona in the first meeting between the teams since the Diamondbacks' first-round sweep in last year's playoffs.

Arizona's Chris Young homered off Ted Lilly in Game 2 last October—prompting Lilly to slam his glove on the pitcher's mound in frustration—and he did it again Friday with a solo homer off the Cubs pitcher in the first inning.

Rockies 4, Padres 2

In San Diego, even reigning NL Cy Young Award winner Jake Peavy could not bail out slumping San Diego against Colorado.

Peavy conceded consecutive bases-loaded singles in the sixth inning, as the Padres lost their fifth straight, just hours

after they released struggling veteran slugger Jim Edmonds. San Diego has the worst record in the majors.

Pirates 3, Braves 2

In Pittsburgh, the home side ended Atlanta's six-game winning streak, as the Braves lost yet another one-run game.

Freddy Sanchez singled home Brian Bixler with two outs in the bottom of the ninth, as the Braves fell to a majors-worst 1-10 record in games decided by the finest margin.

Marlins 7, Nationals 3

In Washington, Ricky Nolasco pitched six strong innings to lead Florida over Washington.

Luis Gonzalez passed the 1,400 career RBIs mark with a bases-loaded double for the East-leading Marlins.

Rays 2, Angels 0

At St. Petersburg, Florida, James Shields pitched a one-

hitter to steer the Tampa Bay Rays to a victory over the Los Angeles Angels.

Evan Longoria's two-run, ninth-inning homer snapped a scoreless tie.

Twins 7, Red Sox 6

In Minneapolis, struggling Mike Lamb hit a two-run single in the bottom of the ninth to give Minnesota a win over Boston.

Lamb, who entered the game to replace an injured second baseman, was averaging only .207 for the season before hitting Jonathan Papelbon's two-out 1-2 pitch for the game winner. Papelbon has blown consecutive save opportunities.

Rangers 4, Athletics 0

In Arlington, Texas, the home side posted its third straight shutout to end Oakland's four-game winning streak.

Scott Feldman pitched six innings and then the bullpen com-

going into the weekend.

He will be paired with Bernhard Langer, who has already won twice this year—on the Champions Tour.

The two-time Masters champion and former Ryder Cup captain thought about withdrawing Thursday morning when he felt pain in his lower back, which caused his groin and left knee to ache, along with his left shoulder. All those creaking joints, and the 50-year-old Langer still managed to produce a 67 and entertain hopes of winning against kids who weren't even born when he won his first Masters.

What cost him the 36-hole lead was a double bogey on the island-green 17th without ever

Paul Goydos, 43, also was one shot behind, although he didn't attribute his fine play to experience.

"I'm more journeyman than veteran," he said after a 71.

Crashing the party—naptime might be more apropos—was Sergio Garcia, the 28-year-old Spaniard whose driving was as spectacular as his putting was atrocious. Garcia hit all 14 fairways, missed only three greens and took 33 putts on his way to a 73.

What cost him the 36-hole lead was a double bogey on the island-green 17th without ever

going into the water.

Garcia's tee shot went over the back of the green and rolled down the artificial turf path, leaving him a chip over a corner of the water. His shot came out hot, rolled off the green and only a slight rise in the first cut of rough kept it dry. He chipped weakly and missed another putt, then missed a 7-foot birdie putt on the last.

"I probably deserved a little bit more than what I got," Garcia said.

Pardon the rest of these guys if they feel as if they're playing on borrowed time.

"You shake the tree, a leopard's gonna fall out."

Yeah, leopards really do hang out in trees. And, yeah, Bryant is not only the symbol for this team, he is also now its voice, less than a year after everybody just wanted him to shut up.

The change is dramatic but, as Stern said before the game, "Hey, it's the NBA, it's crazy."

Even Lakers Coach Phil Jackson, who once ripped Bryant in a book, recognized the change in attitude.

"I think there's some people who turned their thumbs down on Kobe after the 2003-2004 season, they washed their hands of being Kobe fans," said Jackson. "That happens to stars in this game. Familiarly breeds some kind of contempt. ... W

wake the interest in him again this year by the team's play."

That play has reached a new level not because Bryant is a more skilled player, but because he is a more involved player, shoving his teammates to the front of the stage time and again.

He clearly trusts them more. And so they trust themselves.

Before the game, somebody asked the plain-speaking Jazz Coach Jerry Sloan why he didn't display Kobe's prose.

The fans wore a shirt that honored Kobe with the word, "Our" on it, as in, "Our Team. Our Time. Our MVP."

And, as perhaps the coolest honor of all in a town filled with the world's best screenwriters, the giant pre-game sheet video once again displayed Kobe's prose.

It was one of his quotes from earlier in the postseason.

"Because he just throws it to somebody else and they make a layup," he said, pausing. "I don't know if that makes any sense or not."

A couple of years ago, that would not make any sense. Now it makes perfect sense.

In the final seconds of the third quarter Thursday, it took perfect form.

Odom grabbed a rebound in front of the Utah basket. Bryant dribbled it around the Laker three-point line, shooed away defender Matt Harpring, spun around, found Fisher in the corner, then watched Fisher hit a three-pointer for a 13-point lead.

"There are times when people don't realize what they do for the game and what the game does for them until they are retired," Stern said. "I'm glad to see when players come to that understanding earlier. ... Kobe seems to be at that point now."

Finally, typically, when Bryant was given his pre-game award, he requested that his teammates come to center court to join him.

"I'm so thankful, I'm just, gosh, I'm at a loss for words," Bryant said.

The fans helped him.

MV ... well, you know.

bined to extend Texas' pitchers' scoreless streak to 31 in a row.

Indians 6, Blue Jays 1

In Cleveland, Casey Blake and Ben Francisco hit two-run doubles in a six-run seventh inning to help Cleveland past Toronto.

Cleveland starter C.C. Sabathia got the better of Toronto's Roy Halladay in a duel of Cy Young Award winners.

Tigers 6, Yankees 5

In Detroit, Kenny Rogers pitched into the seventh inning to guide Detroit over New York.

Ivan Rodriguez had three hits, driving in a pair of runs for the Tigers.

Rogers held the Yankees to two runs before New York scored three runs in the ninth.

Orioles 7, Royals 4

In Kansas City, Missouri, Baltimore got its 11th straight win over Kansas City.

Aubrey Huff and Melvin Mora homered and Steve Trachsel got an overdue victory for the Orioles.

White Sox 4, Mariners 2

In Seattle, Jose Contreras pitched seven sharp innings to lead Chicago over Seattle.

Contreras gave up only one run for the White Sox, while Paul Konerko hit a two-run double.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

MLB STANDINGS

AMERICAN LEAGUE

East Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	23	15	.605	—
Tampa Bay	19	16	.543	2 1/2
Baltimore	18	18	.500	4
New York	18	19	.486	4 1/2
Toronto	17	20	.459	5 1/2

Central Division

Minnesota	18	16	.529	—
Chicago	17	17	.500	1
Cleveland	17	18	.486	1 1/2
Detroit	16	21	.432	3 1/2
Kansas City	15	20	.429	3 1/2

West Division

Los Angeles	22	15	.595	—
Oakland	22	15	.595	—
Texas	17	20	.459	5
Seattle	14	23	.378	8

NATIONAL LEAGUE

East Division

Florida	21	14	.600	—
Philadelphia	21	16	.568	1
New York	17	15	.531	2 1/2
Atlanta	18	16	.529	2 1/2
Washington	15	21	.417	6 1/2

Central Division

St. Louis	22	15	.595	—
Chicago	20	15	.571	1
Houston	19	17	.528	2 1/2
Milwaukee	17	18	.486	4
Pittsburgh	16	19	.457	5
Cincinnati	14	21	.400	7

West Division

Arizona	23	13	.639	—
Los Angeles	19	16	.543	3 1/2
Colorado	15	21	.417	8
San Francisco	14	22	.389	

The Week in Sports

Salas, others make sports headlines

By JON PEREZ
jon_perez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Various achievements in the CNMI sports scene made headlines this past week with CNMI junior golfer Brent Makana Salas leading the list.

Salas, who is the son of former Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Carlos Salas and his wife Roxy, will compete in the 2008 Callaway Junior Golf Tournament set this coming July at the Sycuan Golf Resort in San Diego.

Salas will play in the 7-8 age group and follows the footsteps of R.J. Macaranas,

who also took part in the same competition last year. Salas qualified after averaging 82.75 during the first two qualifying rounds held last month.

The Saipan Outrigger Canoe Club, meanwhile, overcame fatigue and the rough channel in last week's 3rd Annual Tinian Crossing.

Despite the wind conditions Team SOCC bested last year's record of three hours and 33 minutes by reaching Kilili Beach Park in 3:14, which was nine minutes longer than their crossing going to Tinian at 3:09.

In the Coalition of Private Schools Sports Association high school basketball league

finals, the Mt. Carmel School Knights completed its amazing run in the boys division, while the Saipan International School Lady Geckos made it three in a row in the girls side.

The Knights pulled off a 64-54 win over the Grace Christian Academy Eagles in the boys division, while the Lady Geckos foiled MCS' double celebration scoring a 40-34 decision against the Lady Knights Friday afternoon at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Meanwhile, six pairs and one singles player in the seven divisions were crowned on Championship Tuesday in the Inaugural Michelob Ultra Badminton

Tournament at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Leading the list of winners is Priyantha Wijayaguharatne, who won two titles in the men's A singles and doubles events. He defeated Ryan Achas in the men's singles finals with a masterful 21-5, 21-12 win.

Robert Talavera and Gloria Omechalang, for their part, were hailed champions of the May Budweiser King and Queen of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament, while Raphael Zapanta won his third Bing Energy Drink Prince/Princess of the Lanes Tenpin Bowling Tournament title of the year.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Brent Makana Salas will compete in the for 7-8 age group of the 2008 Callaway Junior Golf Tournament set this coming July at the Sycuan Golf Resort in San Diego.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Saipan Outrigger Canoe Club paddles across the Tinian channel in last Sunday's 3rd Annual Tinian Crossing. Inset, the entire crew enjoy a light moment after reaching Kilili Beach.



JON PEREZ

Some members of the Mt. Carmel School Lady Knights pose with their runner-up trophy in the Private School League's high school division basketball league finals.



Players and supporters of the Grace Christian Academy Eagles celebrate their boys and girls teams' second and third place finishes in the recently concluded Private School League's high school division basketball league finals. GCA also earned the coveted Sportsmanship award for their fair play.

Members of the Saipan International School Lady Geckos celebrate their title after beating Mt. Carmel School Lady Knights in the basketball finals of the Private School League's high school division. The Lady Geckos completed a rare three-peat.

JON PEREZ



last March 27 also at the FML Baseball Field.

Anthony Tenorio pitched four one-hit innings, in a game shortened by the 10-run mercy rule, fanning six batters while walking two more. Ioanis Rasa pitched one inning in relief to earn the save.

Rasa, in the bottom of the

fifth, forced Isaiah Lizama to a grounder where Robert Guerrero picked up the ball and made the relay throw to Wensner Namelo at first base for the first out.

Rasa struck out Mart Sablan and ended the game when he made Jack Reyes to groundout on a 1-3 putout play.

Rasa went 2-for-3 with a double and three RBIs. He had a two-RBI single in the first and an RBI double in the second.

Tom Agulto, who reached first base on an error by D9ers catcher Mike Iguel in the first inning, went 2-for-2 with four runs. He had a two-RBI triple in the second inning.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

May Budweiser Queen of the Lanes Gloria Omechalang is flanked by runners-up Ron Cal, right, and Diane Chong during the awards ceremony last Monday at the Saipan Bowling Center in San Jose.

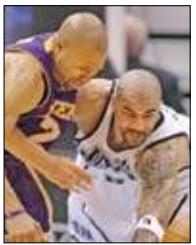
SUNS

From Page 28

SENIOR LEAGUE

Fielders 11, D9ers 0

On Thursday, the Tan Holdings Fielders completed its 11-0 win over the D9ers in a game that was stalled by a power outage



Boozer, Jazz beat Lakers; cut series lead to 2-1

Carlos Boozer broke out of his slump with 27 points and tied his career playoff-high with 20 rebounds, leading the Utah Jazz to a 104-99 victory over Los Angeles on Friday night. **25**

Saipan Tribune Sports

28 SUNDAY, MAY 11, 2008



Salas, others make sports headlines

Various achievements in the CNMI sports scene made headlines this past week with CNMI junior golfer Brent Makana Salas leading the list.

27

SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Suns burn Enforcers in Majors

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Shell Marianas Suns used a seven-run bottom of the fifth scoring rally to squeeze out a 12-11 win over the DPS Enforcers in Thursday's game in the Majors division of the Saipan Little League at the Miguel Basa "Tan Ge" Pangelinan Field.

The Suns finally nailed their first win ending an 11-game losing streak to get out of the cellar in the 16-team field. The loss dropped the Rep. Diego T. Benavente-backed Enforcers' record to 1-12.

Paul Celis earned the win pitching 2 1/3 innings in relief where he allowed one earned run on three hits striking out two batters while walking two more.

After the Suns' seven-run rally, Celis slammed the door shut on the Enforcers in the top of the sixth inning. He began the sixth by striking out Alvin Nepaial for the first out. He



then walked Matthew Tenorio to put a runner on base.

Celis bounced back after that picking up a Patrick Somorang grounder and making the throw to shortstop Perry Celis to prevent Tenorio from reaching second base for the second out.

Somorang reached second base when Suns pitcher Celis walked Brandon Reyes. He moved to third on a passed ball to put the tying run closer to home plate while Reyes, who represented the winning run, stole second base.

Both the Enforcers' base runners were left stranded, however, after Celis forced Ismael Flores to groundout on a 1-3 putout play with first baseman Martin Taman stretching to catch the throw to end the game.

Celis went 2-for-3 with one run, while Juden Joyner, who struck out in his first at bat, went 1-for-2 scoring a run to go with his triple and two RBIs. Joyner had an RBI triple in the Suns' fifth inning scoring splurge.

Keith Concepcion also went



JON PEREZ

An Ol'Aces runner tries to go back untouched to first base in this file photo taken in their opening game against the Kagman Lion Hearts in the Junior League division of the Saipan Little League at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

1-for-2 with two runs, a double, and two RBIs. He contributed an RBI double in the

Suns' seven-run fifth inning.

The loss wasted Vince Rangamar's 3-for-3 performance

to go with his two runs, a double, and two RBIs. Justo Castro went 2-for-3 with one run and an RBI.

See **SUNS** on Page 27

Sanchez, Cano top Mother's Day badminton meet

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Ingrid Sanchez and Riza Cano bested five other pairs to rule the Mother's Day Badminton Tournament held Friday morning at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Sanchez and Cano overcame a first set loss to beat recently crowned champions Babes Cielo and Ana Rose Omori, 17-21, 21-16, 21-18, in the finals.

The Northern Marianas Badminton Federation organized the one-day special tournament, held two days before today's Mother's Day celebration.

The loss prevented Cielo and Omori to continue with their winning ways as they both won titles in different divisions in the recently concluded Michelob Ultra Badminton Tournament.

Cielo teamed up with Loyda Ito to rule the women's B doubles division, while Omori paired up with Angie Ito in the women's C class in the month-long tournament sponsored in part by Michelob-MARPAC, At Your Service, SaipanCell, JET Holdings, PMIC, Serenity Salon, Elegance Café, NIC, Canton Restaurant, National Office



Participants of last Friday's Mother's Day Badminton Tournament pose for a group photo after the games at the Gilbert C. Ada gymnasium.

Supply, Makeover Beauty Salon, Megavision, Venus Beauty Salon, Vargas Construction, Esolutions Inc., Philippine Consul General Wilfredo Maximo, and N.C. Matsumoto.

Loyda Ito and Juliet Ramos placed third in the Mother's Day tournament that followed a knockout, random-draw format.

Other pair of mothers that joined were Shirley Kim and

Malou Mendoza, Elma Labuson and Lucelle Lampera, and Emily Vargas and Annette Ta.

Last Tuesday, the NMBF concluded its Inaugural Michelob Ultra Badminton Tournament also at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium where six pairs and one singles player emerged as champions.

Leading the list of winners was Priyantha Wijayaguraratne, who won the men's

A singles then teamed up with John Nguyen to rule the men's A doubles.

Joseph Santos and Alvin Alvarez ruled the men's B division, while Cielo and Loyda Ito topped the women's class. Roger Vales paired up with Malou Malasarte to earn the mixed doubles title due to having the higher quotient among the five pairs that survived the single elimination round.

By BILL PLASCHKE
(c) 2008, Los Angeles Times



Bryant certifies MVP award

LOS ANGELES—Kobe Bryant stared down the crowd as if he were staring down his teammates. He shouted into the cavernous arena as if he were shouting into a huddle.

"I love you," he screamed. "Now let's get this party started!"

And so they did, the Lakers, the fans, everybody following their leader these days into this growing notion of greatness.

Wednesday was supposed to be Bryant's MVP celebration, but, typical of his MVP season, he shared it with everyone else.

Derek Fisher brought the steamers, throwing in 22 points on soaring shots that seemed to scrape the scoreboard flood lights.

Lamar Odom brought the stick to break the pinata, muscling inside with a sweat-stained shirt, a strangely fierce stare and 16 rebounds.

Bryant was, as usual, the candles, a constant burn of 34 points, eight rebounds, six assists, MVP, MVP, MVP.

Now, and you knew this last metaphor was coming, there is icing on the face of the Utah Jazz, who lost Game 2 of this Western Conference semifinal by a score of 120-110.

Utah also, incidentally, may have also lost a series that they now trail two games to none.

Even traveling back to the toughest homecourt in basketball—they lost just four times there this season—the Jazz are also surely carrying a sense of dread.

They're not playing that bad. They're not playing Denver dead. They pound hard and pass well and always stay somehow connected.

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